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NUMBER 110

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Papacy and Power

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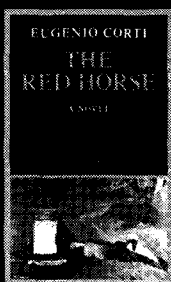


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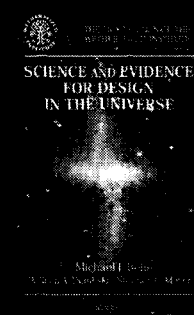
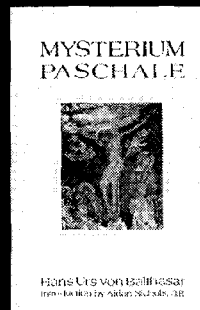
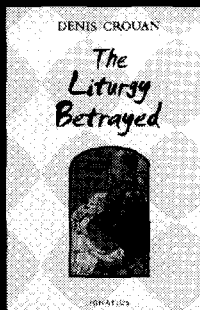
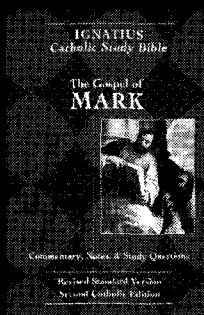
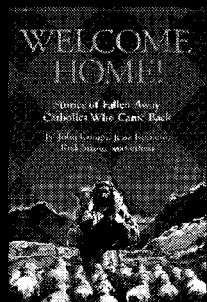
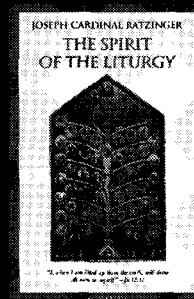
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Correspondence

Credible Catholicity?

Richard John Neuhaus says that my assertion in the (London) *Sunday Times* regarding Pope John Paul's disability and early retirement to bed, etc., was a lie (While We're At It, June/July 2000). I was given the information about the Pope on what seemed to be good authority at the time, and so it was a mistake rather than a lie. I have now double-checked the facts about the Pope's day, and I have also checked Father Neuhaus' extraordinary claim to have spent many hours and meal times with the Pope, and I find that he is telling the truth. In consequence I acknowledge that mistake publicly through your periodical and I shall seek to correct the error also at an appropriate point in the *Sunday Times*.

While I am on the subject of mistakes, your periodical has perpetuated a serious mistake about me. In your correspondence section in April 2000, William A. Donahue cited Ronald Rychlak's accusation in *Hitler, the War, and the Pope* that I wrote in 1991 that nothing short of a miracle would have prompted me to believe in God. That statement was taken from a book I wrote (published in the U.S. as *Hiding Places of God*) which was precisely about the miracle that did take place in my life in the late 1980s, and that resulted in my return to the Catholic Church. My book tells at great length the story of a remarkable religious experience and a long journey back to faith. Whoever originally dug up the quotation cynically omitted the context of my confession of apostasy and the full story of my reconversion. Hence it is not true, as has been reported by FIRST THINGS and others, including Rychlak (who, incidentally, was well aware of it since we crossed swords over it in *Brill's*

Content in 1999), that I am an apostate only pretending to be a Catholic in order to create a dramatic and untrue effect in my book *Hitler's Pope*. My book on Pius XII may have errors and omissions, but I wrote it in good conscience. I am happy to debate what people consider to be errors of fact and interpretation and to publicly correct them as they come to light. But those errors do not include telling lies about the status of my faith. The false comments about my faith have been used to discount the thesis of *Hitler's Pope*.

I will not whine to you about defamation; how could I when so many people are convinced that I have defamed a saintly pope: "He who lives by the sword . . ." But I am sure that FIRST THINGS would stop short of repeating such a serious allegation—lying about being a Catholic—knowing it not to be the case. In fact, you might wish to put that right.

I feel bound to add that my jaundiced perception of Pius XII has not budged my faith in the Catholic Church one iota.

John Cornwell
Jesus College, Cambridge
England

RJN replies:

It is, of course, good to be reassured of the state of Professor Cornwell's faith. In *Hitler's Pope*, however, he made his credibility part of the argument by asserting that, when he began his writing, he was an active Catholic disposed to a favorable view of Pius XII and was subsequently shocked by what he allegedly discovered. Among the reviewers of the book, Prof. Rychlak is by no means alone in challenging that assertion. Reviews of *Hiding Places of God* described Prof. Cornwell, with good reason, as an agnostic and former Catholic. Other publications by Prof.

Cornwell in the 1990s reinforce that assessment. The complete *Brill's Content* exchange between Rychlak and Cornwell is at <www.brillsscontent.com/2000apr/columns/hitler.shtml> and readers may wish to consult that website. On the basis of the evidence, the account offered in *Hitler's Pope* of Prof. Cornwell's status as a Catholic and attitude toward Pius XII when he began writing the book appears to be disingenuous.

Darwin and Conservatism

In "Conservatives, Darwin & Design: An Exchange" (November 2000), Larry Arnhart restricts the universality of William A. Dembski's specified design criterion and then criticizes it.

As I understand Professor Dembski's concept of *specified complexity*, the right combination of specificity and complexity simply ensures that chance alone cannot account for certain phenomena. The detection of intelligent design that cannot be explained by human intelligence requires that other intelligence be responsible. Barring fantasies such as the intervention of space aliens, a supernatural agent must by default be responsible for the creation of humanity. As a Christian, Prof. Dembski can hardly be blamed for discussing the implications.

However, Prof. Arnhart states that "we cannot infer a divinely intelligent designer from our human experience" and would essentially reduce Prof. Dembski's intelligent design criterion to a method of detecting intelligence that gives false signals (false "positives") when human (or animal) agents are not responsible. However, there is nothing in the underlying logic of Prof. Dembski's intelligent design criterion that limits the detection of intelligent design to human or animal intelligence. One assumes that logic is logic, human or divine.

Prof. Arnhart does make an excellent point, however, regarding

the timidity of intelligent design proponents. They are quite adept at pointing out the inadequacy of Darwinian evolution to account for the creation of mankind, but offer no positive explanation of how God accomplished this miracle. This is a very difficult area to tread in since it requires reconciling the Bible with biology and is undoubtedly even more hazardous to one's professional well-being than intelligent design. But sound work in this area is long overdue.

John F. Lang
Florence, South Carolina

Although he does not state it explicitly, Larry Arnhart gives away the presupposition on which the rest of his argument is based in the last paragraph of his reply to Michael J. Behe and William A. Dembski. "By what observable causal mechanism," he asks, "does the 'intelligent designer' execute these miraculous acts?" He shows his true colors as a believer in materialism, for a miracle, by definition, is supernatural and outside the laws of nature. So he keeps looking for physical explanations that at the end of the day are not there.

Science is a great tool, but it is not the only or even the best source for knowledge. Nor is it only a tool for the defense of materialism. It is in fact dependent upon philosophy, for without certain philosophical assumptions being true (e.g., the orderly nature of the physical world, our ability to trust our senses to acquire data, etc.), science cannot even get started.

Prof. Arnhart's differentiation between "humanly intelligent design" and "divinely intelligent design" is merely a distraction. For what we do know is that the types of "specified complexity" we see in nature are *not* created by randomness. Further, appealing to "intelligent design" is not an explanation to fill in the gaps of our knowledge, but is based upon what we do know. There is no reason to expect that the apparent design

will necessarily be explained in physical terms.

Cory Wilson
Forks, Washington

As a Coast Guard officer, I hope that Professor Larry Arnhart would think differently in real maritime distress than he does aboard the good ship Darwin. A clear demonstration that the ship of natural selection is sinking will not coax him overboard; he will remain at his post until another vessel proven to be seaworthy pulls alongside.

This line of reasoning is problematic, for both the mariner and the scientist. At sea, many heavy weather rescues are now performed by helicopter. When no direct hoist can be made, the pilot's instruction, heard through howling wind, may be to don lifejacket and leap into the water. Only then can recovery be effected, safely away from the wreck's debris. People who insist on a small boat recovery in such circumstances are the frustration of every lifesaving crew.

Prof. Arnhart seems to be in similar straits with Darwinian theory. He apparently refuses to take seriously any evidence against Darwin unless it comes with a valid alternative "positive theory" of origins. For a social scientist to take this position puzzles me. Doesn't the scientific method function by proposing a hypothesis and trying to prove it wrong, with *negative* evidence? Where the hypothesis is not strictly testable, doesn't the same basic approach still apply? In any case, why must negative evidence against one theory depend on positive evidence for another?

Perhaps being a scientist without a theory is as alarming as being a mariner without a ship. Waiting for a "positive theory" may be the respectable and rhetorically advantageous thing to do, but is it scientific, and does it grasp the truth? Jumping into the cold sea of not being "taken seriously by the scientific communi-

ty” would surely be a shock, but the courageous heart will never look back.

Dean C. Bruckner
Annandale, Virginia

In reading the exchange between them, I kept waiting for Larry Arnhart to score some real points against Michael J. Behe, William A. Dembski, and the other intelligent design theorists, but all I saw was the standard Darwinian same-old same-old. This is a pity, because it seems to me that intelligent design is looking for a meaty argument to cut its teeth on. What we have seen so far, though, has been thin gruel indeed.

Professor Arnhart’s argument against Behe just plain missed the point. If Prof. Behe were arguing from ignorance (i.e., that no Darwinian mechanism is yet known for the development of, for instance, the biochemistry of vision), then it would be reasonable to answer, as Prof. Arnhart does, that it’s just a matter of time until we do know such a mechanism. Behe’s actual point, though (at least as I read him), is simply a matter of logic—the Darwinian mechanism, taken on its own terms, cannot account for vision (or the immune system, etc.). There is no way to “get there from here” with random mutations as the only vehicle. One or two steps of the process confer no selective advantage, so there would be no reason for them to be retained. Natural selection can only operate on the raw material present to it at a given moment; “promising innovations” will not pass the filter unless they confer an advantage *as they are*, not as they might someday become. Prof. Behe’s argument requires an answer to the effect of, “Here are examples of mutations that have been retained, even though they confer no selective advantage, and this is why they are consistent with Darwin’s theory.”

Prof. Arnhart’s take on William Dembski with regard to “recourse to the supernatural” simply seems disingenuous. Prof. Dembski’s theory of

specified complexity, in and of itself, requires no theistic conclusions, but *as a Christian* Dembski explores the implications of the theory from a Christian perspective. A Jewish writer (such as Gerald Schroeder) might have drawn Jewish conclusions (and wouldn’t likely have invoked “the Logos theology of John’s Gospel”). (There is an ironic symmetry here with the oft-repeated claim that Darwinism doesn’t compel atheism; and yet plenty of Darwinists think that it does.) At root, Prof. Dembski simply formulates criteria by which an inference of design can reasonably be made—if a thing *looks* designed, how do we decide if it makes sense to think that it *was* designed? The question of the designer’s identity need only be addressed, if at all, much later. (It should be noted, however, that having identified a thing as “designed,” the list of possible designers has been shortened by one—“Nobody” would no longer be one of the options; therein, perhaps, lies the rub.)

When Prof. Arnhart gets around to the point he really wants to make—that we should embrace Darwinism because it supports the idea of a fixed human nature—it strikes me as something of a non sequitur. If a fixed human nature is the requisite concept, I don’t think we need the Darwinian hypothesis to get there. There must be dozens of other (and better) candidates, including intelligent design. The only way that Darwinism distinguishes itself from the crowd is if we stipulate in advance that all candidates will be required to pass a filter for scientific materialism, and, in fact, that is Prof. Arnhart’s criterion. Why scientific materialism? He doesn’t really say; it’s something like a bedrock principle for him. It’s just how things are, not subject to question.

Craig K. Galer
Lansing, Michigan

Several obstacles stand in the way of Larry Arnhart’s assertion (borrowed

from Francis Fukuyama) “that Darwinian biology rightly understood confirms our commonsense view of human beings as naturally social animals whose social life depends on a natural moral sense, which thus supports the conservative view of human nature.”

First and foremost, Darwin’s materialist underpinnings are part of a far more comprehensive account of nature, Epicurean materialism, stretching all the way back to ancient Greece. He did not invent the theory of evolution. It was already spelled out very clearly by the great Roman Epicurean Lucretius in his *De Rerum Natura*. Anyone reading this account can only be struck by how little Darwin added.

Why point this out? Because both for Lucretius and for Darwin, nature is essentially amoral. Morality arises only as an accident of natural selection, and it does not arise in just one form; like finch beaks, it has many variations, none of them better than any other.

A sign of this is the strange plea with which Darwin ends his *Descent of Man*. Man spends much time worrying about the breeding of his animals, Darwin says, taking “scrupulous care” of the “character and pedigree of his horses, cattle, and dogs before he matches them; but when he comes to his own marriage he rarely, or never, takes any such care.” The “social instincts” that form “the basis for the development of the moral sense” are a result of natural selection; therefore, we do not find them in all human beings. In fact, the problem is that “the inferior members” of society, who lack not only intelligence but moral sense, are breeding at such an alarming rate as “to supplant the better members of society.”

The cure? “There should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring.”

The obstacle that Darwin so delicately wishes to lay aside is that most cherished of conservative institutions, monogamous permanent marriage. After all, you don't breed your best racehorse with only one mare.

A second point. The materialism that undergirds Darwin's account is today coupled with the Baconian view of nature as malleable to technological force. Any moral limits based on natural limits are only as permanent as the limits of our current technology. If the natural limits that supposedly form the basis of our "moral instincts" are ultimately the result of the chance variations of matter and energy under the pressures of the struggle for preservation, why shouldn't we take evolution into our own hands? There is no reason for prohibiting the manipulation of nature. Thus, the seemingly natural limit which evolutionary nature has handed us (say, that a baby comes from sexual intercourse between a male and female) can be overridden by in vitro fertilization so as to make the time-honored conservative institution of marriage unnecessary. Darwin's goal of the propagation of the right sort of human being would be greatly aided by sperm banks, genetic screening, and artificial insemination.

I'm sorry, but Mr. Arnhart seems not to have read Darwin, nor our present situation, very carefully.

Benjamin Wiker
Department of Classics and Honors
Franciscan University of
Steubenville
Steubenville, Ohio

Because Larry Arnhart criticizes opponents of Darwinian theory for neglecting the truth and falsity of intellectual arguments in favor of defending the foundations of traditional morality, I was surprised to find him defending Darwinism in much the same manner that he criticizes.

Professor Arnhart emphasizes biological evidence for social traits in

humans and animals (possessiveness, territoriality, and cooperation) as support for a notion that these traits are evidence of Darwinian biology. From here, he argues that socialist theories which violate these "instincts" are doomed to fail, and concludes that "a Darwinian understanding of human nature confirms conservative social thought."

I ask, by what rationale am I compelled to believe that such "biological instincts" are the expression of traits that have been reproductively rewarded? The mere existence of biological evidence for these traits no more proves evolution than the existence of my eye proves it. If we agree that man is biologically equipped for possessiveness or vision, then we can expect to agree that he will demonstrate those whether or not we understand why. How, then, does Darwinism confirm conservatism?

Prof. Arnhart argues that Darwinism denies the Marxist notion of the radical malleability of human nature. But if, as he seems to assert, human nature is the product of Darwinian evolution, it is inherently malleable, though perhaps gradually so. His argument that we must embrace Darwinism for its ability to sustain conservative reasoning is unpersuasive.

Mary Ann Field
Kingston, Washington

Larry Arnhart replies:

Phillip E. Johnson, Michael J. Behe, and William A. Dembski have been trying to persuade conservatives to reject Darwinian biology and to adopt "intelligent design theory" as an alternative. They assert that the case for Darwinism is both intellectually weak and morally subversive. In my article I disputed these claims by arguing that Darwinism is intellectually and morally defensible and that a Darwinian naturalism provides scientific support for the conservative view of human nature.

Professor Dembski insists that intelligent design theory is "entirely

separable from creationism," because intelligent design can be detected through scientific methods of natural observation with "no recourse to the supernatural." Thus, proponents of intelligent design theory are not just criticizing Darwinian theory; they also claim to offer an alternative scientific theory of their own. Like Mr. Lang, I am disappointed by the failure of the intelligent design theorists to fulfill this promise by developing a positive theory of the observable causal mechanisms by which the intelligent designer creates every species of life and every "irreducibly complex" mechanism that is beyond human or animal design. I cannot understand how such a theory could be set forth with "no recourse to the supernatural." Mr. Wilson insists that the intelligent designer of the universe would have to work by miracles that are outside the observable laws of nature. But wouldn't explaining such miracles require the "recourse to the supernatural" that Prof. Dembski denies? Believing in miracles is an exercise in religious faith, not in scientific explanation. Natural science can lead us up to ultimate questions about the First Cause of the laws of nature. But answering those ultimate questions is a matter of faith.

I agree with Mr. Bruckner that there are difficulties with Darwinian theory—difficulties that Darwin himself confronted. But I cannot see how emphasizing those difficulties confirms intelligent design theory as an alternative scientific theory.

Mr. Galer claims that Prof. Behe has shown through a purely logical argument that complex mechanisms such as the visual system cannot be explained by Darwinism. Actually, Prof. Behe seems to concede that Darwin offered a plausible account of how complex visual systems could have evolved from simpler systems. As Prof. Behe indicates, however, explaining how a nerve becomes sensitive to light was beyond Darwin, because this would have required a

knowledge of biochemistry that was beyond nineteenth-century science.

Mr. Lang says that “there is nothing in the underlying logic of Prof. Dembski’s intelligent design criterion that limits the detection of intelligent design to human or animal intelligence.” But if Prof. Dembski is going to appeal only to natural human experience with “no recourse to the supernatural,” then his “underlying logic” does indeed prevent him from moving to supernatural causes that would be beyond natural experience. As I argued in my article, Messrs. Dembski and Behe fallaciously employ equivocation in the use of the term “intelligent design” so that they can move from “*humanly* intelligent design” to “*divinely* intelligent design” without acknowledging that this transcends the world of natural experience and enters the realm of faith.

Ms. Field suggests that conservatives can accept the “biological instincts” of human nature without any need to accept Darwinian explanations for the origin of those instincts. Moreover, she worries that viewing human nature as a product of Darwinian evolution would make human nature “inherently malleable, though perhaps gradually so,” which might sustain the Marxist notion of the radical malleability of human nature.

Although Darwinian biology denies the eternity of species, it affirms the reality of species over long periods of evolutionary time. Even if species are not eternally fixed but have evolved from ancestral species, this does not make them any less real for as long as they endure.

Part of that reality is that the human species is endowed with instinctive propensities to natural desires such as parental care, sexual mating, familial bonding, social ranking, and justice as reciprocity. (These are five of the twenty natural desires that I explain in my book *Darwinian Natural Right* as rooted in human biology.) If the good is the desirable, then human ethics is natural insofar as it sat-

isfies those natural human desires.

Unlike Mr. Wiker, I see no evidence that Darwin denied the natural basis of the desire for conjugal bonding in marriage. On the contrary, Darwin’s biological theory of marriage as an expression of human nature was elaborated in Edward Westermarck’s *The History of Human Marriage*, which is still the best defense of the conservative view of marriage as a natural institution.

Against Marxists and other utopian reformers who strive to transform human nature through social experimentation, conservatives look to the natural norms set by human nature. Darwinism sustains that conservative view of social life as rooted in natural law by explaining the biological basis of the natural human inclinations. A Darwinian conservatism could revive the natural law tradition by reaffirming Thomas Aquinas’ insight that “natural right is that which nature has taught all animals.”

Cynical About Goo-Goos?

When James Nuechterlein (“Goo-Goo Time,” November 2000) suggests that the thoughtful and informed independent voter is a treasured myth, he is certainly being cynical. That’s okay; cynicism is often justified by facts. But when he says that the beliefs of most American voters “can be defined . . . as either liberal or conservative, which means they fit more comfortably within” one or the other of our two major parties, he is both cynical and mistaken.

In fact, most Americans of my acquaintance (and generation) hold an eclectic pattern of beliefs, and are not easily labeled. It is perhaps facile to observe, by way of example, that one of the major parties is consistent in its support of abortion rights, and another is consistent in its support of capital punishment, while a significant portion of the electorate is appalled by both.

Because of our two-party arrangement, citizens are called, in election

after election, to choose people and parties for whom they feel little passion (and that little is often manufactured by advertising and ratings-hungry television programs). At best, they may choose to vote on a single issue, be it the environment or the military or some other specificity on which they can agree with their chosen candidate. Never mind the deep and, yes, philosophical disagreements on a host of lesser subjects, all of which the voter has resignedly squelched in order to fulfill his or her civic duty.

To dismiss as “radicals of right or left” those whose political convictions are fully and effectively represented by neither the Democrats nor the Republicans is unfairly reductive. It presumes that liberalism and conservatism in their present forms are the only viable philosophies of government; worse, it presumes that two mammoth organizations, answerable both to corporate donors and to their own radical fringes, are the natural and inevitable vehicles of American democracy.

The problem with those “good-government” types whom Mr. Nuechterlein disdains is not that they want politics without partisanship. It is merely that they need more parties to choose from.

(The Rev.) Michael Church
St. Luke’s Lutheran Church
Farmingdale, New York

James Nuechterlein replies:

Three quick points: 1) I do not see why it is “cynical” to point out the fact, known to all careful students of American politics, that, as Pastor Church puts it, “the thoughtful and informed independent voter is a treasured myth.” There’s a difference between skepticism and cynicism. 2) I did not say that “the beliefs of most American voters ‘can be defined . . . as either liberal or conservative.’” I said that only of “strong partisans.” 3) I also did not “dismiss as ‘radicals of right or left’” all those who think their political views are ad-

equately represented by neither Republicans nor Democrats. I made the quite different point that “it is only radicals of right or left who consider Republicans and Democrats as Tweedledum and Tweedledee.”

Pastor Church’s argument, in short, is not with what I wrote, but with what his misreading made of what I wrote.

Do We Need a Supreme Court?

How meaningfully can Steven D. Smith (“Legal Theories Nobody Believes,” November 2000) analyze studies of the Supreme Court when he apparently does not fully comprehend the nature of the judicial process, the separation of powers, and the rule of law?

He says that “judicial invalidation of laws enacted by elected legislators (or, in the case of ballot initiatives, by the citizens themselves) appears to transgress the premises of democracy. Why, in a nation committed to ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people,’ should five robed appointees—or, often, just one—be permitted to overrule the decisions of the people or their chosen representatives?”

According to Professor Smith, the courts should never reverse an act of Congress or of a state legislature, or invalidate a referendum, no matter what they provide. But in that situation the political majority always has uncontrolled power, and minorities, including holders of property, have no rights.

In that case, why have a Supreme Court at all?

John Tomasin
West New York, New Jersey

Steven D. Smith replies:

Though I would plead guilty to “not fully comprehend[ing] the nature of the judicial process, the separation of powers, and the rule of law,” I protest that I should not be convicted of this deficiency on the evidence

of the essay that Mr. Tomasin criticizes (but seems not to have read with any care). The problem of the legitimacy of judicial review in a regime that counts itself democratic (or the “countermajoritarian difficulty,” as it’s often called) is a familiar one—and the subject of virtual libraries of analysis by political theorists and legal scholars. In my essay (which was after all a review of several books), I simply note that problem, as countless others have done, and I describe and comment on the responses of the authors whose books I reviewed. The review offers no affirmative prescriptions or prohibitions—and certainly does not advocate the positions Mr. Tomasin ascribes to me—concerning the proper judicial role.

Dangers for Voucher Schools

In “Populism and Parental Choice” (November 2000), Professor John E. Coons considers in passing the dangers of a loss of religious identity for religious schools; although he does not say so explicitly, he appears to think that they can be avoided by carefully crafted legislation. He should, in my opinion, be far less optimistic. The relatively minimal regulations of today can easily be expanded later, and schools will then be deeply dependent upon public funds.

But I wish to concentrate on an issue that is often overlooked in these debates—the issue of distinctive educational identity. It has happened before that when something desirable (say, a college education) is declared a right for all, quality is lost in the attempt to provide it. This danger is more imminent for voucher schools than is the loss of religious identity, for even the “minimal” requirements already proposed raise it to a serious likelihood. It is hard to believe, for example, that college-prep private high schools with stiff academic admissions tests would be able to use these unmodified amidst regulations

for “racial neutrality,” which always end up requiring particular numerical outcomes. As a plausible precedent, charter schools in Michigan are required to admit students without regard to academic ability. There is also the matter of standards for graduation. In the Michigan proposal, eligibility for vouchers is tied to whether particular public schools have an excessive proportion of student failures. This would provide voucher schools with a powerful incentive not to fail “too many” students themselves.

Finally, would voucher schools retain undiminished their power to expel students? It is an unpopular fact that private schools are safer and academically better than their public counterparts in part because permanent expulsion is a real possibility for incorrigibly disruptive, profane, or dangerous students. I am highly dubious about whether this freedom would continue once vouchers were accepted.

Many private schools have viewed themselves as providing a highly specific type of education to those who value it. Public schools, on the other hand, must regard themselves as providing general educational (and other) services to any who need them. Between these two visions there is a great gulf fixed. When private schools become quasi-public by accepting vouchers, they will sooner or later exchange one self-image for the other. Thus, in all probability, the very educational superiority for which private schools are valued will be eroded as a direct consequence of universalizing “private” education.

Lydia McGrew
Kalamazoo, Michigan

John E. Coons replies:

I take Lydia McGrew’s point seriously and have done so since the 1960s. Stephen Sugarman and I have consistently promoted strong private school identity both in theory and in the details of model legislation.

The answer to the legislative threat

to school identity differs from state to state depending upon the availability of the popular initiative to reform the relevant constitution. Ms. McGrew's Michigan (along with roughly twenty other states) allows such amendment by the people without legislative involvement. In such states proponents of school choice can and should draft their proposals so as to disable future legislators from increasing regulation affecting school identity. One such model reform would simply cap all controls on private school curriculum and hiring practices at their present (or some historic) level. This form of amendment would also continue the school's control over its own discipline (academic and behavioral) so long as it disclosed its rules to parents at the time of application.

Thus, the school could require its students to take and pass those ethics and religion courses that it prefers. It would also control the bulk of its admissions, exactly as it does today, but now without fear of legislative manipulation. However, one-fifth or so of its new admissions each year would go to low-income children of the school's selection—in accord with the settled practice (or expressed aspiration) of most private schools.

New regulation of facilities and of health and safety would in theory remain possible—but only by a substantial super-majority of both houses of the state legislature, with corresponding protections against local government bodies. Schools would not be regulated fiscally beyond requiring general disclosures indicating solvency. The initiative would guarantee a voucher large enough to encourage new schools, and extra tuition would be allowed, so long as it was meanstested (a practice familiar in the private sector).

Obviously legislatures historically have had the capacity (and often the inclination) to overregulate schools. In states like Michigan, voucher initiatives, when properly drafted, thus

represent the instrument not to diminish but to enhance both the security of the school's identity and the diversity of choices for the family. In non-initiative states, by contrast, the legislature will remain a threat to private schools until the general culture of schooling is altered. Such a fundamental shift is predictable as choice demonstrates its benign effects in those states that successfully reform by initiative. In fact, the change may already be occurring at some deep level of civic consciousness. This is suggested by the popularity of the Milwaukee program, a reform legislated in a state that lacks the popular initiative. State regulators in Wisconsin have tried and (so far) failed to strangle this promising use of private enterprise.

The Wisconsin experience holds a political lesson for other states—both those with and those without the initiative. As of last November, citizens in six states have sent eight voucher initiatives to the polls. Unlike the progressive Wisconsin program, none of these propositions was written to include the necessary minimum protections for those non-rich families who most need choice; and all eight were crushed by huge majorities of the voters. Meanwhile, national opinion surveys and electoral results show parental choice to be a very popular idea—but only when vulnerable families are given a modest preference. Paradoxically, it appears that the best opportunity to protect the identity of private schools will come as society helps them to reach out to the poor through subsidized choice provided by well-drafted initiatives. Ms. McGrew's saving remnant may find its own identity rescued by the democratic instincts of ordinary people.

Against Atheistical Fanaticism

In his review of Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence* (November 2000), John J. Reilly overlooks Barzun's refusal to face the dark side of the En-

lightenment. Barzun praises the admittedly subversive agenda of *L'Encyclopedie*, thus embracing the atheism, materialism, and cynicism of the philosophes. Edmund Burke was right on point when, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, he stated, "We cannot be ignorant of the spirit of atheistical fanaticism that is inspired by a multitude of writings dispersed with incredible assiduity and expense and by sermons delivered in all the streets and places of public resort in Paris. These writings and sermons have filled the populace with a black and savage atrocity of mind, which supersedes in them the common feelings of Nature, as well as all sentiments of morality and religion." In my view, *From Dawn to Decadence* carries on in that same "spirit of atheistical fanaticism."

As for Barzun's defense of Rousseau, if people can't yet make the connection between Rousseau's puerile utopian socialism and the bestiality and madness of the Terror, the Holocaust, the Soviet Gulags, and Mao's Cultural Revolution, it only tends to prove that many of us are as self-deceiving and blind to human nature as Messrs. Rousseau and Barzun.

For Barzun to rail, as he does at the end of his book, at the incivility of the current "postmodern" generation is both disingenuous and ludicrous. Our current crop of deconstructionist fanatics are the Frankenstein's monsters, i.e., the unnatural children, of modernism. Mr. Reilly has, like most reviewers, chosen to genuflect to Barzun, presumably due to Barzun's great age and eminence in academia. May I be permitted to raise a voice in dissent? Napoleon Bonaparte is said to have referred to Talleyrand as "excrement in a silk stocking." While I wouldn't go so far as to say that about Jacques Barzun, it seems an apposite description of his book.

Gary Inbinder
Woodland Hills, California

John J. Reilly replies:

The Enlightenment is one of those things that it does little good to condemn. Since everyone, left and right, pious and atheist, has been about equally influenced by it, any critique is part of the phenomenon. Regarding Rousseau, I believe that Barzun's point is that, while there have indeed been many puerile utopians, a fair reading of Rousseau's works shows that he did not happen to have been one of them.

There is a commendable lack of fanaticism, atheistical or otherwise, in *From Dawn to Decadence*. We would do well to imitate it.

Doctored Words?

Putting words into a writer's mouth and then pillorying him for them is hardly a characteristic either of responsible journalism or serious debate.

There is nothing in my *New England Journal of Medicine* editorial—so unfairly criticized by Richard John Neuhaus (While We're At It, November 2000)—that would lead any objective reader to the erroneous conclusion that I would recommend basing a decision about physician-assisted suicide on such a shallow notion as “whatever the patient wants” or “whatever the doctor deems to be ‘the unique needs’ of the patient.” Neither in the article nor elsewhere have I ever written or said such a thing, nor do I subscribe to it.

Not only that, but I have been an outspoken critic of the Oregon legislation that allows physician-assisted suicide without weighing the entire range of complexity of an individual's request. I am anything but the “strong proponent of physician-assisted suicide” that Father Neuhaus calls me. The fact is that situations do arise—no more commonly, perhaps, than one or two times in any physician's career—in which even the finest efforts at palliation cannot relieve suffering. It is then, I believe, that a physician, a patient, a family, and the wise counsel of consultants

may come together in agreement that such a course is permissible.

Sherwin B. Nuland, M.D.
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

RJN replies:

Dr. Nuland was quoted verbatim and in context. His editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* concludes: “Physicians who believe that it is a person's right to choose death when suffering cannot otherwise be relieved must turn to their consciences in deciding whether to provide help in such a situation. Once the decision to intervene has been made, the goal should be to ensure that death is as merciful and serene as possible.” It is true that in the *New Republic* (November 2, 1998) he criticized what he sees as several deficiencies in the Oregon law, but in the same article he writes, “This is not to say that it will ever be possible to relieve every patient's suffering so thoroughly that there will no longer be any occasion to consider assisted suicide or active forms of euthanasia, such as lethal injections.” He further states, “If the fully informed person whose suffering I cannot relieve repeatedly asks that I aid him in his determination to end his life, whether by pill or injection, I am obliged to do so. A tolerant society should allow it.” Assuming that Dr. Nuland believes strongly what he says he believes, it is accurate to describe him as a “strong proponent of physician-assisted suicide.”

Christians and (Some) Jews Together?

“*Dabru Emet*: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity” (November 2000) is both heartening and a call to something more than passive gratitude. At a recent reconciliation service cosponsored by the Christian congregation I attend and our local synagogue, I was very deeply moved and, at the same time, fearful that the fraternal and spiritu-

al intensity of that moment would dissipate in the light of our usual pre-occupations. It is true that our congregations already share ventures in public service. But the uniquely sacred nature of reconciliation, if it is to be effectively sustained, calls for a correspondingly sacred expression.

With this end in mind, I suggest that we need, more than anything else, to *pray together*—to establish some calendar and ritual, grounded in our common scriptures, that will place us, as one, in the presence of God. Nothing will so sustain our good intentions, prevent our slipping back into indifference and suspicion, or render us ready for new revelations as will our common prostration before the mystery of divine purpose.

Until we pray together with some regularity, I fear that good will and good deeds alone will not achieve that familial harmony we are meant to enjoy as children of a common Father.

John J. Savant
Professor Emeritus
Dominican University of California
San Rafael, California

Thank you for printing “*Dabru Emet*: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity.” I found the document heartening and moving. But its billing on your front cover, “What Jews Believe About Christianity,” is at least preposterous and probably irresponsible. As the document itself puts it, the authors and signatories are “speaking only for ourselves—an interdenominational group of Jewish scholars.” The statement is the product of a group of more or less liberal-leaning, or at least ecumenically inclined, academics and rabbis. A statement by a similarly composed group of liberal-leaning, ecumenically inclined Christian academics and clerics on some major topic of Christian faith would hardly be billed in *FIRST THINGS* as “What Christians believe about . . .” I have not yet seen Jewish response to the statement, but it's fair to predict it will cause some con-

trovery in some influential corners of the Jewish world. It will no doubt be provocative, lauded by many, suspected by some, and rejected by others. In any case it will provide occasion for substantial conversation and debate among Jews, academic, rabbinic, lay,

and secular. Wonderful though the document is to my eyes, touting it as "What Jews Believe About Christianity" is just plain silly.

P. J. Nugent
Earlham College
Richmond, Indiana

The editors reply:

To Mr. Nugent: We thought of making it "What Somewhat More Than One Hundred and Seventy Distinguished Jewish Professors and Rabbis Think About Christianity," but it just wouldn't fit on the cover.

Catalogue Choices

I could buy a garden gargoyle
And set it out relentlessly scowling
Toward the kitchen window of the woman
Who flings dead branches from her yard to mine
Because they've fallen from my willow trees.
I would love a garden gargoyle.

But there are outdoor angels, too.
Perhaps if one stood serenely smiling
Toward the kitchen window of the flinger,
It would sweeten her cherished sourness
So she'd leave the branches for her yard man.
I could love an outdoor angel.

Still, I'm afraid I'd love the gargoyle more
If only I thought God would not keep score.

Mary Margaret Milbrath

THIS TIME

Winning Semi-Ugly

James Nuechterlein

The best thing to be said about the endgame of the presidential election is that, bad as it was, it could have been much worse. It was unfortunate, to put it mildly, that in *Bush v. Gore* the U.S. Supreme Court voted five-to-four along predictable ideological lines to end the endless election. But had the Court not acted to quash the Florida Supreme Court's reckless extension of the state recount, the intermittent talk of "constitutional crisis" we had heard during the five weeks following November 7 might well have become reality. (For a somewhat different take on this point, see RJN's analysis of the election in Public Square.)

Consider the circumstances. It is quite possible (though not certain) that the manual recount, conducted with disputed and varying standards and up against an imminent deadline, would have wound up with incomplete results but with Al Gore in the lead. The Florida court would then presumably have insisted that the Gore electors be certified. The Florida legislature, meanwhile, convinced both that the recount was invalid and that, in any case, it was constitutionally charged with selecting the state's electors, would have picked electors pledged to George Bush. The two sets of electors would have been presented to Congress for approval, and, assuming votes along party lines, the Senate would have opted for Gore's list, the House of Representatives for Bush's. Under the Constitution, the issue would have gone for resolution to the House, where, since each state has one vote and Republicans have majorities in a majority of state delegations, Bush would finally have emerged as victor.

The result, in other words, would have been the same, but now with another month of hypercharged partisan rhetoric and conflict. But that would have been only the beginning. Under these conditions, Gore supporters would be expected to accept defeat when not only had they won the popular vote nationally, but they had been announced by the Florida Supreme Court as victors in the state that tipped the election to Bush. That would have been a political disaster that left a future Bush Administration under an impossible cloud of illegitimacy, and it is clear that the U.S. Supreme Court majority saw all this

when it stopped the Florida recount *before* there could be any announcement of a Gore lead in the Florida popular vote.

Does this make the Supreme Court majority Justices political partisans, as so many Gore supporters have charged? Only if one thinks that their decision to overrule the Florida court stemmed not from genuine constitutional concerns but from a controlling desire that Bush win, and that he be seen as having won legitimately (or at least as legitimately as conditions allowed). That, of course, is a highly controverted matter, and partisans of left and right have predictably disagreed on their readings of it.

It is worth noting that in addition to the five majority Justices two other Justices, Stephen Breyer and David Souter, had noted possible constitutional problems in the recount process. (Their alternative to the majority decision—that the case be remanded to the Florida court with permission to continue the count but under a unified statewide standard—made no practical sense. What would be the standard set, under what authority, and, in any case, how could the vote be thoroughly and fairly completed, with time for further possible legal appeal, under the looming deadlines indicated by state election law?)

Critics of the majority decision have emphasized the presumed hypocrisy of Justices who are normally advocates of judicial restraint acting, in this case, to override a state court in interpreting state electoral law, a matter normally held to be outside federal purview. Suddenly, or so it is said, strict constructionists became judicial activists, and under conditions that put their judicial integrity under suspicion.

There is no doubt irony here: the U.S. Supreme Court had to engage in what looked like judicial activism in order to thwart judicial activism run amok in Florida. But that convicts the majority Justices neither of hypocrisy nor partisanship. They felt compelled to act to block a state court decision that the *Weekly Standard* described as "an irrational and legally groundless edict that might actually alter a presidential election."

Now the *Weekly Standard*, which was firmly in Bush's corner, can hardly be counted as a neutral observer in this matter. But consider the words of Charles T. Wells, the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court who was one of the dissenters in the four-to-three decision extending the recount (and who had gone along with an earlier unanimous decision of the court extending the certification deadline in order to accommodate a manual count of the ballots).

"I have a deep and abiding concern," Judge Wells wrote, "that the prolonging of judicial process in this

counting contest propels this country and this state into an unprecedented and unnecessary constitutional crisis. I have to conclude that there is a real and present likelihood that this constitutional crisis will do substantial damage to our country, our state, and to this Court as an institution.” “I must regrettably conclude,” he continued, “that the majority ignores the magnitude of its decision,” aspects of which he goes on to characterize as “quite extraordinary” and “[in] plain error.” In sum: “I could not more strongly disagree with [the majority] decision to . . . prolong this judicial process.” Wells’ dissent, read in full, is devastating (as is the concurring dissent of the other minority judges, which says, among other things, that “the majority is departing from the essential requirements of the law by providing a remedy which is impossible to achieve and which will ultimately lead to chaos”).

Wells also provides a potential defense of the propriety of the U.S. Supreme Court’s intervention in the case. This is not simply a state matter, he points out: “Directing [a lower circuit court] to conduct a manual recount of the ballots violates Article II, Section 1, Clause 2 of the United States Constitution, in that neither this Court nor the circuit court has the authority to create the standards by which it will count the . . . ballots.” Wells also reminds his fellow judges that the U.S. Supreme Court had earlier in the counting process raised questions as to the Florida

Supreme Court’s authority to order partial recounts, and his colleagues’ decision to do so anyway “appears to me to be in conflict with the United States Supreme Court decision.”

Wells anticipates the overturn of the Florida court’s action, one way or another: “I . . . believe that the majority’s decision cannot withstand the scrutiny which will certainly immediately follow under the United States Constitution.” That does not specifically invite the U.S. Supreme Court to be the agent of the reversal—he could have had in mind the Florida legislature or the U.S. Congress—but the reference to the “conflict with the United States Supreme Court decision” would seem, at the very least, to leave that option open.

All in all, it seems reasonable to conclude that the decision in *Bush v. Gore*, while unusual, was far from indefensible. The Court faced an extraordinary and unprecedented situation. It knew that the Florida court had perpetrated outrageous constitutional mischief, and by acting as promptly and authoritatively as it did it minimized the effect of that mischief. The majority Justices, confronted with a political and legal mess for which there was no unmessy solution, found perhaps the least messy solution available. Not every active use of the Supreme Court’s authority constitutes an exercise in judicial activism. FT

Opinion

Unremarkably Lutheran

Matthew Rose

“**W**hen given the option,” Garrison Keillor tells us, “Lutherans will always *downsize*.” So far as I can tell, personal “downsizing” is the only way to make sense of what Mark Noll fairly calls the “remarkably unremarkable” history of American Lutherans. Such a quip shouldn’t be anywhere near surprising, let alone offensive, to most of us Lutherans. In fact we probably take “remarkably unremarkable” to be an almost cheery assessment of our famously phlegmatic lives. Such modesty ranks right up there with our other virtues: constancy, candor, and an affinity for things commonplace and unaffected. *Outré* we are not.

A built-in aversion to popularity seems to be Lutherans’ animating instinct. It’s a soundly orthodox one too, most of us think. For all their irresistible silliness, the pious inhabitants of Keillor’s Lake Wobegon certainly have one thing right—all things being equal, Lutherans prefer to be as unassuming as humanly possible. In the annals of American history, we’ve garnered precious little main text; we’re the cultural equivalent of a buried footnote.

How Lutherans have managed to dodge the lime-light of so many American historical moments is truly astounding. You might say that the tone was set as far back as 1565, when explorer Pedro Menendez razed a Huegenot settlement and hanged its misidentified inhabitants “as Lutherans.” At times, we’ve had a membership larger than the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Disciples, and Quakers *combined*, yet our history has been less noticeable than the Unitarians’. (If orthodox Christian historians have judged Unitarians as unfortunately famous, we’ve been justly dubbed famously unfortunate.) Our newsworthy potential, it’s been pithily said, has been “not very great.” While we can now lay claim to Chief Justice William Rehnquist, we still have very little to brag about as far as “movers and shakers” go, a category about which we are naturally suspicious. I’d like to say that Lutherans are busy instead with the silent labor of life, but that sounds too pretentious for Lutheran sensibilities.

An uncommon talent for solitude keeps things this way too. I’ve known a lot of Lutherans who, like me, are never less alone than when by themselves. Cultivating my privacy is a cherished pastime, and marks me, I should think, as incurably Lutheran, at least as far as demeanor goes. At the end of the day, we are a people known for impressive silences, both individually and collectively.

“Success is not a gospel category,” Hans Urs von Balthasar once wrote. Were it not for the fact of its Catholic origins, that statement could serve as a motto for many a small town in Minnesota—too much success, along with spending money, being habits that could very well get out of control. There’s the old maxim to “play things safe,” and then there’s the Lutheran version that gets a little nervous about the “play” part. “Keep things safe” might be more appropriate—after all, we don’t want to give my Grandmother the vapors, or whatever its Norwegian equivalent.

“Lutheran irony” explains all this, really. This basically holds that the surest path to self-righteous impiety is an overly eager piety. As (quasi-Lutheran) Reinhold Niebuhr summed it up, “Human pride and arrogance rise to new heights precisely at the point where the claims of sanctity are made without due qualification.” Historically Lutherans have thus tended to look askance at impatient attempts at vast social improvement, rightly seeing in them human arrogance. Niebuhr didn’t mean to be funny when he said that Lutheranism evinces a “mystical fear of action,” but for a Lutheran student of theology that’s gut-wrenching humor—which, upon further thought, is kind of sad. I once overheard a discussion about campus politics that summed up Lutheran irony quite well: “You’re just *never* going to hear that the Lutherans are angry and they’re mobilizing.”

Yet there’s an interesting flip-side to our unremarkable history. Perhaps no theology is so wonderfully unfitted as Lutheranism for the triumphant, but often disordering, American Century. The American Success Story requires a list of ingredients that reads something like a Lutheran anti-creed: an obsession for the new and untried; a condescension towards the old and tried; a mania for self-expressive accomplishment; a creative drive to overcome, define, and establish oneself over and above others. These distinguishing characteristics have been strung into a charming civic poesy. Yet American Lutherans have been little inspired by this, not being people of an epic state of mind. Fame, for Lutherans, seems best accomplished by accident, if at all. In this vein Falstaff is surely revealed as an “anonymous Lutheran” in his dictum, “The better part of valor is discretion.”

Despite an antipathy towards the historical stage, Lutherans do appreciate the gravity of true drama. Ours, however, is the massive drama that saturates the In Between Time and inflates everyday life and human interaction to cosmic proportions; it searches with a loving gaze for the “inscapes” of the visible world. The humbling dynamism of creation admonishes us, to paraphrase Nietzsche’s Madman, not to try to drink up the sea or wipe away the horizon. At the same time we also realize that our world is in a fragile state, hanging precariously on the thread of God’s love. Accordingly, Lutherans live delicately.

We keep a low profile because for us *nothing* fails to get caught up in the dramatic tension between divine and human righteousness. Creation is thick drama that tends to be upstaged when we become too dramatic ourselves. The “downsizing” Keillor describes isn’t about self-effacement, but about letting the delicate drama of Creation unfold on God’s terms. It involves the recognition, as Josef Pieper said, that reality is always something *more* than can be grasped, “an inexhaustible light that can never be drunk up.” What’s left for us is only humble and hopeful cooperation, aided all the while by faith in God’s plan.

Lutherans are thus people of respectful pauses, about which, two points. First, it would be hard—very hard—to imagine a theology or deportment more out of step with the *zeitgeist*. One social scientist indirectly concluded as much when he described Lutherans as “indistinct,” “hard to identify,” “unobtrusive,” as well as “on the fringe.” Again, that’s more a backhanded compliment than an indictment to a Lutheran. What sets Lutherans apart is the sense of the impassable limits of human existence, a metaphysical reservation that the restless modern temper contradicts at every turn. Our age is one in which spectacles always trump habits, and therefore one that finds the “theology of the cross” not simply a stumbling-block or foolishness, but wholly incomprehensible.

My second point is much more sanguine. Though Lutherans aren’t entirely estranged from the modern world, we most certainly depart from its *modus vivendi* by trying to understand the world before changing it, to put a turn on Marx’s famous line. What we lack in self-assertion we make up for in mental poise—the serenity of the spirit that comes from the *temperantia* of man’s inner order. It is that which also offers us the reminder that we should only seek “to be a model within our range,” as the young Henry Adams said of his own yearnings. Against the whirl and blur of modernity we revel in what Niebuhr called “freedom from anxiety.”

There’s something tremendously comforting and humane about such contentment. It is good to remind

ourselves that at absolutely no point does the gospel guarantee historical success or moral progress. Instead the theology of the cross counsels us to take “long views,” as Burke put it. Burke’s Tory counterpart Dr. Johnson shared an undeniably Lutheran view of human expectations when he rhymed: “How small, of all that human hearts endure, / That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.”

And so Lutheranism offers the peace of mind that comes with a sense of limits, and the imperishable joy that comes with believing that all things work for good. It offers the inescapable conclusion that in our beginning is our end. To “Lutheran irony” I would thus like to add “Lutheran composure,” not a blissful ignorance or a “passive righteousness” (as Luther himself called it), but a healthy faith in the long-term virtue of being, well, spectacularly normal. Not a bad thing that.

MATTHEW ROSE is an Editorial Assistant at FIRST THINGS.

Just Wages

Stephen T. Worland

The National Conference of Catholic Bishops recently issued a statement, *Faithful Citizenship*, calling for “policies that increase the minimum wage so that it becomes a living wage.” In doing so, they cite the one principle of Catholic social doctrine most likely to arouse old class hostilities. The sharpest argument ever offered to justify the minimum wage was provided by Karl Marx in *Das Kapital*. Using the power conveyed by his ownership of the means of production, Marx said, the capitalist compels the worker to produce an amount that exceeds what he is paid in wages. The “surplus value” thus generated is the source of the capitalist’s profit. This being the case, legislation that shifts the balance of power from capitalist to worker is one way to expropriate the expropriators. Workers of the world, unite—and vote for the party that promises to increase the minimum wage.

Of course, no one—least of all the NCCB—would nowadays take seriously Marx’s flat-footed, mechanistic diagnosis of capitalist injustice. But the myth he created—profit is a species of “surplus” that can be painlessly redistributed from investor to worker—lingers on in the communal subconscious to provide justification for increasing the minimum wage. The Bishops’ statement, if it has any effect, will only help revive this myth and the class animosities it engenders.

According to the original exposition of the “living wage” principle by Pope Leo XIII in *Rerum Novarum* (1891), the worker had been reduced to proletarian status by the onset of the Industrial Revolution. Where previously he had tilled land from which he could eke out at least a modest living, now he had been forced into a situation where he could acquire the means of subsistence “in no other way than by his work and wages.” In this situation, his distributive right as a member of the community was reduced to a contractual claim against his employer. But, Leo insisted, each worker, as head of a household, had a right to a wage “sufficient to maintain himself, his wife, and children in reasonable comfort.”

Pope Leo analyzed the social conditions of nascent industrialization and discerned this previously unrecognized moral principle. His American commentators made the policy inference that the natural right to a living wage provides justification for minimum wage legislation. In 1906, Father John A. Ryan, the “labor priest” who became the New Deal’s favorite Catholic theologian, took Pope Leo’s principle to mean that “as protector of natural rights the state ought to compel employers to pay a living wage.” But plausible as it may have seemed, Fr. Ryan’s notion that the right to a living wage called for enactment of a legal minimum was not in fact espoused by Leo XIII, and, what is more important, was clearly bypassed in the subsequent development of the social magisterium.

In *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), Pius XI developed the living wage principle with a rectification of the Church’s traditional teaching on natural law and justice, a rectification intended to transcend the kind of hostility to modernity exemplified in Pius IX’s *Syllabus of Errors* (1864). “Custom,” wrote the medieval expositors, “makes law.” In this view, it is the accumulated experience of the community, distilled into social roles, that provides guidance for individual conduct, linking basic moral precepts with day-to-day practice. Codification, legislative enactment, and formal procedures are secondary and derivative. In a stable society, the provenance of custom can be taken for granted.

But modern societies, with their widespread social mobility, made rule by tradition and custom much more complicated. Pius XI recognized that while moral principles remained the same, the customs by which they were lived changed as often and as quickly as did society. He therefore identified a new virtue, “social justice,” that should guide the evolution of custom.

For Aristotle, the just man is required to fulfill contracts, distribute common goods fairly, and obey the law of the land. For Pius XI, the just man also has a first-order moral obligation to contribute to the devel-

opment of equitable rules and practices in his sphere of society. Social justice is a sort of practical wisdom, which, unlike abstract scientific knowledge, is a grasp of truth acquired “by inclination,” particularly the inclination to good that operates in the soul of the virtuous individual. Such inclination produces a precious fund of wisdom, which sound social policy draws upon to understand and react to new social situations. The “principle of subsidiarity,” often cited as Pius XI’s original contribution to the social magisterium, should be seen in this context; the judgment about how to act should be made at the most concrete and practical level possible. Pius drew on such a conception of practical wisdom and the virtue of social justice to develop his predecessor’s teaching on the worker’s right to a living wage.

Pius adopts the premise of Leo’s analysis that with the onset of the industrial revolution the worker is left with “nothing but his labor by which to obtain the necessities of life.” This being the case, justice requires that “the wage paid the workingman must be sufficient for the support of himself and his family.” However, it is important to note that in developing his teaching on the living wage, Pius XI explicitly acknowledges a fact of life that liberal politicians and trade union apologists love to deny—“a scale of wages excessively high . . . causes unemployment.” A private-sector business firm, unlike a tax-supported government agency or an endowed university, meets its payroll with revenue derived from the sale of products. This being the case, the wage rate must be adapted to market realities.

Evidently, for Pius XI, the achievement of wage justice requires compliance with two different principles. The wage rate must, first, allow the firm to stay in business, and second, provide the worker with income sufficient to support himself and his family. In Michael Naughton’s terminology, the “living wage” must also be a “sustainable wage.” The unavoidable dilemma is evident: What is to be done when the “sustainable wage” that an employer can afford to pay falls short of the “living wage” the household head needs to support his family? At this point in his analysis, Pius XI could have adopted the proposal made by Ryan; he could have called for passage of a law specifying a legal minimum wage. Instead, he cites the virtue of social justice to explain how the tension between sustainable wage and living wage is to be resolved.

The achievement of wage justice involves a multi-stage process. The worker uses his skill and strength to produce wealth to add value to raw material. By such an act of “specification,” so the natural law indicates, he acquires a property right in the commodity produced. However, as an employee using produc-

tive resources owned by another, he regularly exchanges his property right in the commodity for a wage claim against his employer. On payday, he expects to receive not, for example, 4.8 yards of cloth, or 2.4 pairs of shoes, but rather a sum of money. Strict quid pro quo commutative justice requires that the amount of this wage equate with the value of the worker's contribution to production. And microeconomic theory indicates that a wage so proportioned to productivity (to the "value of the worker's marginal product") would indeed be sustainable.

However, according to Pius XI's exposition of the connection between the virtue of social justice and the natural law, the employer's responsibility to the human community does not end when he pays the wage that matches value produced by the worker. For if that sustainable wage falls short of the living wage, the virtue of social justice imposes a further moral obligation on the employer. He must make his best efforts to help the worker increase the value of his work so that his productivity *earns* him a living wage. He is required, for example, to introduce training programs, apprenticeships, educational fringe benefits, i.e., those measures that enhance labor productivity.

And the responsibility does not stop with the employer. The lessons learned in the various workplaces provide the insights and incentive for the development of outside institutions that can support these improvements in workers' conditions. The virtue of social justice requires that all those whose social role bears on the wage relationship—employer, union shop steward, school official—strive to achieve those institutional adjustments that will qualify the worker to earn the living wage.

Thus, Pius assumes, when the virtue of social justice has done its work, both on the shop floor and in the matrix of supporting institutions, the worker will find that the value added to product by his productive effort, the wage claim he acquires against his employer, will generate income sufficient to support his family and to provide the resources required for him to fulfill his social role as household head. He will receive a living wage, not as entitlement conferred by the welfare state, but rather as just reward for his productive effort. The living wage doctrine protects both the worker's distributive rights and his personal dignity.

The living wage doctrine was formulated a century ago to identify a crucial moral guideline that could provide direction for a society undergoing the strains of industrialization. As a critique of policy and practice, as a rebuke to conscience, the living wage principle retains its relevance to this day, for instance in its bearing on the international sweatshop problem.

According to those who would seek justice through

the minimum wage law, the solution to the sweatshop problem seems obvious. The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights should be expanded to include the right to a living wage. Membership in the World Trade Organization would be allowed only to nations that respect and enforce such a right. Adoption of an international minimum wage law would forestall the migration of jobs, deny multinationals the opportunity to play impoverished workers against one another, and head off the international "rush to the bottom" that union leaders warn us about.

However, if Pius XI's analysis of the wage relationship is correct, introduction of an international minimum wage law could have dire unintended consequences. What passes for a reasonable minimum wage in an advanced economy would far exceed the "sustainable wage" that a Third World textile employer could pay and still stay in business. To mandate payment of the international minimum would deprive Third World workers of the jobs they now have.

The grim fact of life is that for unskilled Third World workers, as was the case for the immigrants who manned turn-of-the-century steel mills in the U.S., employment at a low-wage job provides entry into the circle of productivity and exchange, access to the technological patrimony of the modern world. Such access, as John Paul II affirms, is essential for the eventual economic liberation of the Third World poor. To close off such entry with a minimum wage law would benefit workers in the advanced industrialized nations, but such a measure would, in fact, *violate* the preferential option for the poor.

This conclusion does not imply that sweatshop employers are off the hook. According to the teaching on social justice, a firm that moves into the Third World to take advantage of lower wages takes on a grave moral obligation to do what it can to alleviate the background social conditions that produce a dysfunctional labor market. It may be impossible for a textile employer in a competitive market to both offer employment and pay a living wage. He may therefore be morally justified in hiring workers at the prevailing "sustainable" wage. But such an employer must also do his best to rescue the Third World poor from their misery.

By affirming the worker's right to a living wage, Leo XIII made a precious contribution to the moral self-understanding of modern industrialized society. With his teaching on the virtue of social justice, Pius XI indicated that it is, in major part, private sector initiative working steadily for the progressive reform of the rules and procedures guiding common action that is to bring such a right to realization.

Politicians love to drop a reference to the living

wage into debate about the minimum wage. "Does anyone believe," says the familiar complaint, "that you can support a family on \$5.15 an hour?" But, as a matter of fact, linking the right to a living wage with the political push for a higher legal minimum wage, as the NCCB has done, distorts Catholic teaching on wage

justice and, as the discussion of the sweatshop problem indicates, could be a disastrous guide for public policy.

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A Frieze of Stone Saints

Without their heads, they look eloquent
still, seated as they are in an attitude

of attention, upright on thrones. Patient,
I suppose, as the long-buried dead

who perhaps don't know they *are* dead—
what do the dead know? Maybe nothing,

in which case they don't wait for God,
though we tell ourselves they are waiting,

however long it takes. Along this wall
the saints look down without eyes.

Their lost faces either grave or joyful
or both. Never neither. Nor anonymous,

though no one names them. Nor mute. The very stone
testifies: We were made. We remain.

Sally Thomas

Papacy and Power

George Weigel

Pope John Paul II's considerable effect on our times is conceded by admirers and critics alike. The imprint of the shoes of this fisherman can be found throughout the new democracies of east central Europe, Latin America, and East Asia. His critique of "real existing democracy" has helped define the key moral issues of public life in the developed democracies and in the complex world of international institutions. Some sober analysts of papal history argue that one must return to the early thirteenth century, to Pope Innocent III, to find a pontificate with such a marked influence on contemporary public life.

Yet there is a paradox here: the "political" impact of this pontificate, unlike that of Innocent III, has *not* come from deploying what political realists recognize as the instruments of political power. Rather, the Pope's capacity to shape history has been exercised through a different set of levers.

As Bishop of Rome and sovereign of the Vatican City micro-state, John Paul has no military or economic power at his disposal. The Holy See maintains an extensive network of diplomatic relations and holds Permanent Observer status at the United Nations. But whatever influence John Paul has had through these channels simply underscores the fact that the power of his papacy lies in a charism of moral persuasion capable of being translated into political effectiveness.

This paradox—political effectiveness achieved without the normal instruments of political power—is interesting in itself. It also has heuristic value. It tells us something about the nature of politics at the dawn of a new millennium. Contrary to notions widely accepted

since the late eighteenth century, the public impact of John Paul II suggests that politics (understood as the contest for power), or economics, or some combination of politics and economics, is not the only, or perhaps even the primary, engine of history. The revolution of conscience that John Paul ignited in June 1979 in Poland—the moral revolution that made the Revolution of 1989 possible—is simply not explicable in conventional political or economic categories. John Paul's public accomplishment has provided empirical ballast for intellectual and moral challenges to several potent modern theories of politics, including French revolutionary Jacobinism, Marxism-Leninism, and utilitarianism. The political world just doesn't work the way the materialists claim.

At the end of a century in which it was widely agreed that "power comes out of the barrel of a gun," the paradox in the public impact of John Paul II also reminds us of five other truths: that the power of the human spirit can ignite world-historical change; that tradition can be as potent a force for social transformation as a self-consciously radical rupture with the past; that moral conviction can be an Archimedean lever for moving the world; that "public life" and "politics" are not synonymous; and that a genuinely humanistic politics always depends upon a more fundamental constellation of free associations and social institutions in which we learn the truth about ourselves as individuals and as members of communities.

In sum, and precisely because it has *not* been mediated through the "normal" instruments of political power, the "worldly accomplishment" of John Paul II has helped free us from the tyranny of politics. By demonstrating in action the linkage between profound moral conviction and effective political power, this pontificate has helped restore politics to its true dignity while keeping politics within its proper sphere.

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The distinctive *modus operandi* of this politically potent Pope also suggests something about the future of the papacy, the world's oldest institutional office, and about Catholicism in the third millennium of its history.

It is tempting to see John Paul's public accomplishment as the expression of his singular personal experience. His "culture-first" view of history and his bold confidence in the political efficacy of moral truth have indeed been deeply influenced by his curriculum vitae. His Slavic sensitivity to spiritual power in history (prefigured in Soloviev and paralleled in Solzhenitsyn); his Polish convictions about the cultural foundations of nationhood (shaped by a lifelong immersion in the literary works of Mickiewicz, Norwid, and Slowacki); his experience in the underground resistance during World War II and his leadership in a culturally based resistance to communism from 1947-1978—all of these are, if you will, distinctively "Wojtylan" experiences. History viewed from the Vistula River basin *does* look different than history viewed from Berlin, Paris, London, or Washington, D.C. This difference has certainly shaped the potent public presence of the first Slavic and Polish pope.

But John Paul II would insist that he is *not* a "singularity," to adapt a term from astrophysics. Rather, he and his pontificate are the products of the contemporary Catholic Church, as the Church has been shaped by the Second Vatican Council—which Karol Wojtyła has always understood as a great, Spirit-led effort to renew Catholicism as an evangelical movement in history. I would press this farther. In the paradoxical public potency of John Paul II, we are seeing played out, in dramatic form, trends that have been underway in Catholicism for two centuries: trends that were waiting, so to speak, for a new kind of pope to forge a new kind of interaction between the papacy and the world of power.

That popes have been "players" in the world of power since at least the fifth-century pontificate of Pope Leo the Great is a well-known fact of Western history (if there *are* "well-known facts of Western history" these days). So is the fact that, from 756 until 1870, the popes were temporal rulers of a large part of central Italy, the Papal States. The details of that millennium-long history of temporal power are beyond the scope of this discussion. Suffice it to say that it is a tale in which the student of history will find goodness and wickedness, justice and injustice, civility and incivility, ecclesiastical interference in civil affairs and political interference in internal Church affairs. But from this vastly complex story, in which the popes were civilizers as well as temporal rulers, and political leaders on more than one occasion because of the default of those who ought to have taken political responsibility, three key points may be drawn.

The first involves the pope's unique position as universal pastor of a global Church. From at least the late fifth century, when Pope Gelasius I distinguished between "the consecrated authority of the priesthood" and the "royal power" as two distinct modes of authority "by which this world is ruled," it has been understood that the pope cannot be the subject of any other sovereignty. He must himself be a *sovereign*, in the specific, technical sense that in the free exercise of his universal Christian ministry he cannot be subject to any earthly power. Indeed, as Father Robert Graham, S.J., wrote forty-some years ago, "The papacy was exercising a form of sovereignty long before that word took on the clear-cut political and juridical meaning it was later to have." That is why papal diplomacy is conducted by the pope not as head of Vatican City State, but as an expression of the sovereignty of the "Holy See"—the juridical embodiment of the universal pastoral ministry of the Bishop of Rome. The recognition of this papal sovereignty in the exchange of ambassadors between the Holy See and sovereign states, and in the Holy See's representation in international organizations, tells us something about the world as well as about the papacy: it is a tacit recognition that moral norms are relevant in international public life and that there are actors in the drama of world politics other than states.

The second lesson to be drawn from the papacy's entanglement with temporal power involves the Church's role in the creation of civil society. The *libertas ecclesiae*, the "freedom of the Church," has been a check on the pretensions of state power for centuries, whether that be the power of feudal lords, absolutist monarchs, or the modern secular state. Where the Church retains the capacity to order its life and ministry according to its own criteria, to preach the gospel, and to offer various ministries of charity to the wider society, that very fact constitutes an antitotalitarian or, to put it positively, a *pluralist* principle in society. According to that principle, there are spheres of conviction and action where state power does not, or ought not try to, reach.

However confusedly the various popes may have sought to assert this principle theologically or to secure it practically, the fact remains that the *libertas ecclesiae* was a crucial factor in creating the social space in which other free institutions could form over the centuries; the controversy with Gregory VII that brought Henry IV to Canossa was about more than the relative positions of these men in the society of their time. No matter how tyrannically some popes behaved on occasion, the papacy *as an institutional reality* has been a barrier to the tyranny of the political for a millennium and a half or more. And if the institutions of

“civil society” are schools for learning the proper exercise of political freedom, then the papacy’s defense of the *libertas ecclesiae* helped lay the foundations of modern democracy.

In many instances, however, the papacy’s involvement with temporal power involved a tacit commitment to play the political game by the accepted “realist” conventions. And therein lies the third lesson for today: that *this* kind of entanglement, the agreement to play by others’ rules, can lead to difficulties and betrayals. The worst of these were in the realm of the human spirit and involved attempts to coerce consciences (as Pope John Paul II acknowledged on the First Sunday of Lent last year, when he asked God’s forgiveness for the times in which the Church had used coercive state power to enforce its truth claims). But there was another, perhaps less familiar, dimension to this aspect of the problematic of entanglement: the fact of the Papal States and the pope’s position as a temporal sovereign could lead the papacy into alliance politics that set the universal pastor against part of the flock. In 1830-31, for example, Pope Gregory XVI, because of the complex web of European alliance politics and then-regnant Catholic theories of the rights of constituted sovereigns, sided with Czarist Russia as it suppressed a rebellion of independence-minded Poles.

There are multiple ambiguities surrounding the term “Constantinian,” but neither “Carolingian” nor “Gregorian” quite captures the phenomenon I am trying to describe here. So permit me to call the deep entanglement of the Church and the papacy with state power, and the papacy’s tacit acceptance of criteria for political judgment that were sometimes incompatible with the Church’s evangelical mission and the papacy’s evangelical function, the “Constantinian arrangement”—and to note that this state of affairs was the product of both a distinctive history and a strategic judgment: that the Church’s truth claims and public position required the buttressing of something like “Christendom.” This “Constantinian arrangement” had numerous theological and practical tensions built into it from the outset. With the Second Vatican Council and the pontificate of John Paul II, a renewed ecclesial self-understanding and different historical circumstances have created a new model of engagement between the papacy and power. With Vatican II and John Paul II, what I am calling (for want of a better term) the “Constantinian arrangement” has been quietly buried.

The beginnings of a new form of papal engagement with the world of power date to the mid-nineteenth century. At that point, the Papal States had been under continuous pressure for forty years, first from revolutionary France and Napoleon, later from Italian

nationalism. The popes resisted the loss of their temporal sovereignty to the bitter end. Yet as the old edifice of papal temporal power was crumbling, the first probes toward a papacy of witness and moral suasion could be detected.

Cambridge historian Owen Chadwick locates the first of these probes in 1839, when Pope Gregory XVI condemned the slave trade. It was a condemnation he had no capacity to enforce; Gregory XVI couldn’t even get the Portuguese government, the chief offender on this score, to pay him any attention. But he issued the condemnation anyway, in an effort at moral persuasion. A new method of papal engagement with the world of power could also be detected in the mid-nineteenth-century popes’ struggles with European governments, defending local bishops and local churches on contested questions such as local episcopal authority and marriage law. Here, for the first time, the popes brought into play the levers of international public opinion and the international press. During this period, the popes gained more effective control over local churches; but this trend, often deplored as “centralization,” also meant that the popes could help local churches against various governmental pressures. Because of this, Chadwick concludes, Catholics in Germany, France, the United Kingdom (and even Spain and Austria) came to think of papal power as “indispensable to their freedoms.”

In 1854, 1862, 1867, and 1869-70, large numbers of bishops came to Rome from all over the world for, respectively, the doctrinal definition of Mary’s immaculate conception, a protest against encroachments on the temporal power, a celebration of the jubilee of the martyrdoms of Peter and Paul, and the First Vatican Council. These bishops’ presence in Rome demonstrated to the European powers that the Church had a life of its own, independent of the assertive modern state and its tendency to occupy every nook and cranny of social space.

The largest of these gatherings, Vatican I, was, among many other things, a pivotal moment in the emergence of a new form of papal engagement with the world of power. The Council’s declaration that the pope enjoyed a universal pastoral jurisdiction denied, as a matter of principle, that the modern state had any role in the Church’s internal governance; this in turn began a process in which the authority of local bishops (over 80 percent of whom were appointed by governments in the early nineteenth century) was once again tied to their communion with the Bishop of Rome, rather than to their “communion” with their temporal rulers. The large representation of Catholic bishops from outside Europe at the Council demonstrated, against European secularists, that the Catholic Church was not simply a department of the ancien régime.

And the immense personal popularity of Pope Pius IX, widely perceived throughout the Catholic world as a victim of unscrupulous men of power after the loss of the Papal States in 1870, bound individual Catholics to the papacy while creating the modern model of the pope as a charismatic public personality.

The demise of the Papal States was, in fact, the crucial change creating the conditions for the possibility of a papacy that engaged world politics with its own evangelical instruments. This first became evident in the pontificate of Leo XIII, who was, as Chadwick notes, "the first pope since Charlemagne not to inherit a state to govern." Leo's 1879 encyclical on the reform of Thomism, *Aeterni Patris*, suggested that the Church had a distinctive way of engaging the intellectual life, as well as a spiritual life independent of modern state politics. *Rerum Novarum*, Leo's 1891 encyclical "on the condition of the working class" and the Magna Carta of Catholic social doctrine, became a powerful instrument in the hands of a papacy seeking to teach the nations, not rule them—a papacy exerting its influence by *argument*. (Could such a statement of social doctrine have been issued if the popes had remained temporal rulers of the Papal States, burdened with the notion that they possessed plenipotentiary power in social, economic, and political life? It seems unlikely, perhaps even impossible.)

As with any historical process involving a venerable institution, though, the evolution of a "post-Constantinian" papacy from Pius IX to John Paul II was complex and uneven. At the same time as the popes were exploring new modes of engagement with politics and the world of power, the Holy See sought to restore itself as a player in international affairs after the loss of the Papal States. The Lateran Treaty of 1929 settled one problem: as sovereign of Vatican City State (all 108.7 acres of it), the pope was not subject to any higher temporal authority. Throughout the turbulent middle years of the twentieth century, the Holy See tenaciously sought to rebuild its diplomatic relations, to secure the Church's legal standing in modern states, and to give the Church a place at the table in international forums. The table was not always welcoming. In 1919, the Holy See had diplomatic relations with only twenty-six states, principally from Latin America, and Pope Benedict XV was blocked from participating in the Versailles peace conference by Clause 15 of the secret accord that bound Italy to the Allies in 1915.

Conventional ways of thinking about international affairs could lead to myopia at the Vatican at times when clarity of evangelical and moral insight would have been welcome. No serious student of these matters believes that Pope Pius XII was an anti-Semite or that he welcomed the prospect of a Nazi-dominated

Europe. Indeed, serious students of this period know that Pius XII took heroic actions on behalf of European Jews and other victims of Nazism, to the point of acting as a middleman in a plot to overthrow Hitler by force. At the same time, senior diplomatic figures in the Holy See may have been so conditioned by realist modes of analysis that they missed the totalitarian difference in German National Socialism, thinking it rather a particularly ugly form of classic German nationalism. If this is true, it must be noted that the Holy See's diplomats were not alone in this misreading. But it must also must be said that one expects more in terms of moral clarity from the Holy See than from Number 10 Downing Street or the Quai d'Orsay.

In any event, by the mid-1960s the Holy See's quest for a place at the table of international political life had been vindicated. The Holy See had full diplomatic relations with fifty-two countries by 1965 and a settled place as a Permanent Observer at the United Nations after 1964. While these developments were unfolding in the aftermath of World War II, Pius XII and John XXIII developed the model of the pope as a charismatic public figure with international moral authority. Then came the crucial moment: the Second Vatican Council, whose teaching accelerated the transformation of Catholicism into a "post-Constantinian" Church and made possible the reconstitution of the papacy as a primarily evangelical institution.

Rather than conceiving the Church by analogy to the state, as both theology and canon law had done for centuries, *Lumen Gentium*, the Council's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, described the Church as an evangelical movement with a global mission, a movement in which the purpose of office (including the Office of Peter) is to facilitate the response of all the baptized to the universal call to holiness. According to *Lumen Gentium*, every other function of the Church, including its relationship to the world of power, must serve these primary purposes of evangelization and sanctification.

Dignitatis Humanae, the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom, taught that the state was incompetent in theological questions and declared that the Church would no longer put coercive state power behind its truth claims. In doing so, *Dignitatis Humanae* made possible the emergence of the Catholic Church as an assertive, effective proponent of basic human rights.

Gaudium et Spes, Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, portrayed the free and virtuous society in pluralistic terms, as created by the interaction of a political system, an economic system, and a cultural system. In doing so, *Gaudium et Spes* suggested an image of the Church as the teacher and

evangelist of culture, rather than a political player in the conventional sense.

And *Christus Dominus*, the Council's Declaration on the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church, drew a bright line between the Church and the world of power by teaching that, in the future, governments would not be allowed "rights or privileges" in the nomination of bishops.

On the other hand, as if to underline the unevenness of evolutionary change in large institutions and the complexity of the issues involved in the encounter between the Office of Peter and the world of power, the immediate post-Vatican II period witnessed what may have been the last significant initiative in the 1,650-year history of the "Constantinian" papacy: the *Ostpolitik* of Pope Paul VI (the former Giovanni Battista Montini) and his chief diplomatic agent, Archbishop Agostino Casaroli.

The Montini/Casaroli *Ostpolitik* was a fourteen-year-long attempt to achieve, through classic bilateral diplomacy, a *modus non moriendi* (a "way of not dying") with the Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The *Ostpolitik* included both a tacit papal commitment to avoid a public moral critique of Marxist-Leninist systems, and efforts by the Holy See to curb the activities of clandestinely ordained underground priests and bishops in Warsaw Pact countries. This diplomatic strategy of *salvare il salvabili* ("saving what could be saved," as Casaroli often described it) was informed by two "realist" political assumptions: that the Yalta division of Europe was a fact of international life for the foreseeable future, and that the breach marked by the Iron Curtain would only be closed by a gradual "convergence," in which a slowly liberalizing East eventually met an increasingly social-democratic West. During that glacial process, Montini and Casaroli agreed, the Church had to make provision for the appointment of bishops and the continuity of the Church's sacramental life by reaching agreements with existing governments, even if such agreements were deplored (as they usually were) by the local underground Church.

In electing a Polish pope in 1978, the College of Cardinals did not consciously reject this strategy of accommodation (which Paul VI, who was deeply ambivalent about it, described privately as "not a policy of glory"). Some of those who promoted Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's candidacy were advocates (and, in one instance, an architect) of the *Ostpolitik*. But in the first year of his pontificate, John Paul II made clear that he intended to pursue, personally, a different tack—a "post-Constantinian" strategy of resistance through moral revolution.

Three times in the first four days of his pontificate, John Paul vigorously defended religious freedom as the first of human rights and the nonnegotiable litmus

test of a just society; it was a theme that had been muted under the *Ostpolitik* of Paul VI and Archbishop Casaroli. Then, during his epic first pilgrimage to Poland in June 1979, John Paul comprehensively unveiled his strategy of political change through moral revolution. By returning to his people their authentic history and culture, and thus giving them a form of power that the regime's truncheons could not reach, the Pope demonstrated that the Communist emperor had far fewer clothes than "realist" analysts (including both Western political leaders and Vatican diplomats) suspected. In doing so, he opened the path to the emergence of Solidarity. And the rest, as they say, is history.

In his recent, posthumously published memoirs, *Il martirio della pazienza* [*The Martyrdom of Patience*], the late Cardinal Casaroli, whom John Paul II appointed his Secretary of State in April 1979, suggests that there was no substantive difference between his *Ostpolitik* and the "eastern politics" of John Paul, only a difference of "phases." This is not a claim that will withstand close scrutiny, as two examples will illustrate. Just before John Paul's address to the United Nations in October 1979, Cardinal Casaroli, the cautious diplomat, systematically went through the draft text of the speech, eliminating references to religious freedom and other human rights issues the Soviet Union and its satellites might find offensive; John Paul, the evangelical witness, just as systematically restored the cuts. Then, on a trip to Poland in 1983, shortly after the Pope had had what diplomats refer to as a "frank exchange of views" with General Wojciech Jaruzelski over martial law (those outside the door heard fists being pounded on desks inside), John Paul, standing at the window of the dining room of the archbishop's residence in Kraków, engaged in some banter with students clamoring outside while several guests, including Cardinal Casaroli, tried to continue their dinner. Finally, according to another eminent guest who was present, Cardinal Casaroli exploded, saying to the startled dinner table, "What does he want? Does he want bloodshed? Does he want war? Does he want to overthrow the government? Every day I have to explain to the authorities that there is nothing to this!" That does not sound like the reaction of a man whose differences with his superior were merely matters of tactics or timing.

The more plausible explanation of the relationship between Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Casaroli—an explanation that illustrates the complex dynamics of the relationship of the papacy to power at this transitional moment in papal history—is that, in appointing this loyal and skilled churchman, the architect of Paul VI's *Ostpolitik*, as his own Secretary of State, John Paul was deliberately adopting a dual strategy. Remnants of a "Constantinian" approach to playing by the rules of

the game would be deployed for whatever they might achieve; the diplomatic dialogues initiated by Casaroli over the previous fourteen years would continue, and the Communist regimes in question could not charge the Vatican with “reversing course” or reneging on formal agreements. Meanwhile, the Pope himself would pursue a “post-Constantinian” strategy of appealing directly to peoples who could be aroused to new, non-violent forms of resistance—and thence to self-liberation—through a call to moral arms and a revival of Christian humanism.

The *Ostpolitik* of John Paul II is the clearest example to date of a “post-Constantinian” model of engagement between the papacy and the world of power. It was unmistakably different from the Montini/Casaroli *Ostpolitik*, ecclesiologically, strategically, and tactically. It marked a decisive break with the “Constantinian” arrangement of the past.

What does all this mean for the future? Let me begin to attempt an answer by telling a tale of two journalists.

One of them, a distinguished American columnist and a Jew who has been known to say, “I don’t know whether I believe in God but I sure fear Him,” asked me, on May 16, 2000, who the next pope would be. I said I hadn’t got the faintest idea, to which he replied, “Well, will he be like John Paul?” Yes, I replied, I thought the next pope would continue the evangelical style of John Paul II, including the papal role as global defender of basic human rights. Good, my friend said—and then laughed. When I asked what was so funny he said, “You know, in 1978, I couldn’t have cared less who the next pope would be. Now it’s something important to me.” My friend has no personal religious investment in the papacy. But he recognized that there was something good for the world in the fact of a universal moral reference point, embodied in an ancient office whose occupant acted in world affairs according to the logic of the Church’s truth claims, rather than according to the realist rules of the game.

Three days later, Vittorio Messori, a prominent Italian journalist who had been John Paul II’s interlocutor in the international bestseller *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, wrote a column in Turin’s *La Stampa* arguing that twenty-two years of Slavic exceptionalism and “agitation” had been enough for the Church, and that a return to “normality” was called for—by which Messori meant a return to the Italian papacy. Italians, Messori argued, had a native disposition for the papal office and for maneuvering deftly through the rocks and shoals of history.

The American Jewish agnostic, it seems to me, has a clearer insight into what the papacy of John Paul II has meant for the Church and the world than the Italian

Catholic journalist. And while he would obviously not put it in these terms, my agnostic friend also has a firmer grasp on the fact that the Church, while a “resident alien” in the world, always exists *for* the world, for the world’s salvation, than does the Catholic commentator for whom the Church remains primarily an institution to be managed.

Be that as it may, the clash between these two readings of the meaning of John Paul II will likely be the issue in the succession to John Paul II: *Quale Papa?* What kind of pope? Popes, to be sure, have both evangelical and institutional responsibilities. But *quale Papa?* a pope who is primarily an institutional manager, or a pope who is primarily an evangelical witness?

In the locks along the ship canal that divides Seattle north and south, salmon swimming home to spawn pass through a series of “trapgates,” beyond which there is no possibility of return. With the Second Vatican Council as authoritatively interpreted and embodied by John Paul II, the Catholic Church has passed through a trapgate in history from which there is no turning back. The next pope, or the pope after that, or his fourth or fourteenth successor, may not bring such exceptional gifts of spirit and intellect to the Office of Peter. We don’t know. But Karol Wojtyła’s achievement in recasting the papacy is not Wojtyła’s alone. There is a logic—a *theo-logic*, if you will—in the evangelical/pastoral model of the papacy Wojtyła has so brilliantly embodied that will be difficult to reverse.

There is no one image of Peter in the New Testament, but rather a tapestry of images: Peter the fisherman-disciple, who “left everything” to follow Jesus (Luke 5:10-11); Peter the witness to great moments in the ministry of Jesus, including the raising of Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:37) and the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2); Peter the shepherd, entrusted with the keys to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19) and enjoined to feed the Lord’s lambs (John 21:15-17); Peter the first confessor of the faith, whose sermon on Pentecost after the outpouring of the Spirit marks the beginning of Christian mission (Acts 2:14-41); Peter the visionary who is given supernatural guidance as he baptizes the Gentile centurion Cornelius and his family (Acts 10:9-16); Peter the Christian martyr, whose ministry means being led, finally, “where you do not wish to go” (John 21:8). But the “figure in the tapestry,” to adapt an image from Henry James, the thread that ties these multiple images together, is Peter’s distinctive mission to “strengthen the brethren” (Luke 22:32)—the dominical injunction so frequently cited by John Paul II.

John Paul II has revitalized the papacy for the twenty-first century by retrieving and renewing its first-century roots, which lie in the New Testament’s portrait of

Peter's unique role as the apostle who "strengthens the brethren." In doing so, John Paul has aligned the exercise of the Office of Peter with the Second Vatican Council's teaching on the nature of the episcopate, in which, the Council Fathers write, "preaching the gospel has pride of place." Bishops are, first and foremost, evangelists, not managers. As John Paul has demonstrated with effect, that is as true for the Bishop of Rome as it is for the bishop of the smallest missionary diocese.

That this process of retrieval and renewal will continue beyond John Paul II is also likely because the structure of expectations surrounding the papacy has changed. Now more than ever, both the Church and the world expect the Bishop of Rome to be a global witness to moral truths about the dignity of the human person. Neither the Church nor the world should expect the next conclave to produce a duplicate of Karol Wojtyla; no such carbon copy exists. But the world and the Church are quite right to expect an evangelical/pastoral papacy in the future, rather than a bureaucratic/managerial one. Those expectations must bear on the deliberations of the cardinal-electors, who will know that they are electing a pope not for the Catholic Church alone, and certainly not for themselves, but for the world.

To argue that the pontificate of John Paul II constitutes a decisive moment of development in the Office of Peter in the Church is not to say that the "post-Constantinian" papacy will be without its own ambiguities and tensions, however.

There are built-in ecumenical tensions in the exercise of a global papal ministry of moral witness and persuasion. More than a few evangelical Protestants find this the most compelling aspect of John Paul II's papacy. But the development of this model in the twenty-first century may cause further difficulties with Orthodox Christians, some of whom will see in it a claim of universal jurisdiction they cannot abide. I think they will be mistaken in this, for, as John Paul II suggested in the 1995 encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, the papacy's universal ministry of witness need not include a jurisdictional role in the East of the sort the Bishop of Rome exercises in the West. But psychology can be as determinative as theology in these matters, and Catholics must frankly face the fact that the emergence of an evangelical/pastoral papacy with universal "reach" has added another item to the list of problems to be sorted out with Orthodoxy.

There are also tensions between the evangelical/pastoral model of the papacy and the current diplomatic position of the Holy See. Despite a recent and bizarre effort to strip the Vatican of its Permanent Observer status at the UN, the issue here is not

whether the Holy See *can* act as a diplomatic agent with international legal "personality"; that is a long-settled issue in international law and diplomatic practice. The question is, *should* it?

At the moment, the Holy See enjoys full diplomatic exchange at the ambassadorial level with 172 countries. In developed democracies in which the Church's legal position is secure, this diplomatic representation has little to do with public affairs, and the papal nuncio functions almost exclusively as the papal representative to the Catholic Church in a given country, a representation that has to do primarily with the selection of bishops. In new democracies, papal diplomacy has helped secure free space for the Church to function, through concordats and other legal instruments. In places where Catholics are persecuted or under pressure, the papal nuncio can function as a safeguard for local Catholics: a lifeline to Rome, and to the capacity of popes to focus the spotlight of international public attention on things that authoritarian regimes would rather keep hidden. The fact that the Holy See is a recognized international diplomatic and legal actor also gives the Church and the pope a means of engaging totalitarian regimes with whom the Holy See does not have diplomatic relations, which are usually countries in which the local Church is too weak to defend itself effectively.

In addition to its Permanent Observer status at the UN, the Holy See is represented diplomatically at the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Organization of American States. On this international plane, where issues of grave moral import are now regularly being decided, the diplomatic quiddity, so to speak, of the Holy See can make a significant difference. John Paul II's defense of the universality of basic human rights at the UN in 1979 was a factor in the collapse of communism, as it was in 1995 in meeting the challenge of those who claimed that the very idea of "human rights" was Western "cultural imperialism." The Pope's personal campaign prior to the 1994 Cairo World Conference on Population and Development, and adroit Holy See diplomacy in Cairo itself, frustrated the efforts of the Clinton Administration and its European and NGO allies to have abortion-on-demand declared a fundamental human right under international law. Holy See diplomacy since 1994 has been important in rallying opposition to the new totalitarianism of lifestyle libertinism in regional and international forums, on issues of the family, homosexuality, etc. There are undoubtedly ambiguities in aspects of this kind of papal engagement with the world of power; in trying to accomplish certain moral ends (e.g., to secure universal access to education and parental

rights in education) the Holy See may find itself acceding to declarations full of other dubious matter (e.g., the International Convention on the Rights of the Child). But it is also true that something important would have been lost these past two decades had the Holy See and the papacy not been diplomatically engaged on the international plane.

No matter how the debate—*quale Papa?*—is resolved, it is extremely unlikely that any pope in the foreseeable future will dismantle the Holy See's diplomatic network. In some instances, this would damage the position of hard-pressed local churches. Internationally, it would mean abandoning a modest but real leverage that, in itself, is arguably good for the international system: the leverage of moral suasion, which reminds the world of power that the world of power is not all there is.

But try, for a moment, a thought experiment: From the Church's distinctively evangelical point of view, would the abandonment of international legal and diplomatic linkages between the Office of Peter and the world of power be *desirable*? Is this engagement not in deep tension with the notion of the Church as an evangelical movement in history? Can popes be moral witnesses and "players" at the same time? Wouldn't it be simpler, cleaner, purer if the papacy abandoned all formal linkages to the structures of worldly power and acted as an agency of moral witness alone?

It depends on what you mean by "Church" and by "politics."

The Church, according to Vatican II, is an evangelical movement in history. To be such a movement *in history* means to have a concrete institutional form and to deal with other institutions through the best means that human beings have developed for ordering our common life: law and politics. The Church is not a state and must carefully avoid acting like a state. But the Catholic Church is more than a voluntary association with a cause. It is the institutional embodiment of truth claims, and according to its own self-understanding, the basic forms of that institutionalization are of the will of God: the Church as a *communio* of believers; the episcopate, the priesthood, and the Office of Peter as servants of that *communio* and its service to the world.

However ambiguously—and the ambiguities will be lessened if the Church of the third millennium further develops the "post-Constantinian" model of engagement with power—the fact of the papacy's formal entanglement with national and international political structures is an expression of the Church's reality as a sovereign community: a community that fully possess-

es the means to achieve its spiritual ends, and is therefore neither dependent on, nor subject to, other sovereignties in the pursuit of those ends. That expression is important for the Church to be what she is.

The reality of the papacy's formal entanglement with politics is also important for politics, however. If by "politics" we mean the will-to-power and my capacity to impose my will on you, then it would be unseemly, even self-contradictory, for an evangelical movement committed to the method of persuasion to be a "player" in that game. But if we understand politics, even international politics, to include mutual deliberation about the *oughts* of our common life—if in politics, even the politics of nations, we understand ourselves to be engaged in the sphere of ethics—then things look different. A global evangelical movement constituted as a sovereign institution for its own spiritual ends has a place at the table in the deliberation of those *oughts*. That "place" is both a reminder of the ethical dimension of the exercise of power and a check on the absolutist tendency built into all modern politics. By reminding the world of power that it is not sovereign over all aspects of life, the papacy, engaged diplomatically, performs an invaluable service to the world of power. It is not the power to bring princes to confession on their knees, in the snow. It is more important than that.

The Holy See today plays a central role in mounting one crucial kind of moral argument—an argument rooted in the inalienable dignity of the human person—in an international political environment in which multiple other "moral" claims are in play: most particularly, at this moment in history, the desperately defective morality of utilitarianism and its reduction of the human person to an object fit for manipulation. For the papacy to withdraw from formal involvement in international political life would be to concede, in practice, a considerable part of the terrain of moral argument to the new Benthamites and their plans for remaking the human condition by remanufacturing human beings. The Holy See is not the only actor engaged in moral and political combat with the new utilitarians. But as the Cairo population conference demonstrated, it is the most potent and effective defender of the dignity of the human person as the foundation of rightly ordered thinking about politics.

Thus, precisely for the world's sake, the Church must continue to run the risks of ambiguity in its engagement with worldly power, even as the papacy of the twenty-first century is transformed in the image of John Paul II, the heir and champion of the Second Vatican Council. FT

How the Evangelicals Saved America

George McKenna

Imagine a new land colonized by peoples from many countries. They push aside the natives, who offer varying degrees of violent resistance and are put down with merciless force. Imagine that after a perennial series of skirmishes between colonial powers, one of them finally wins—but then loses control after the colonists confederate and successfully fight for their independence. The former colonies, now independent states, soon fall to quarreling with one another, and a breakup is threatened. It is averted by the creation of a new central government, but before long the government is shaken by party strife, personal rivalries, and internal rebellions. Some of the states threaten secession. Foreign nations intrigue and attempt to intervene, and a new international war breaks out; the country is invaded and the Capitol is burned.

The story seems to be headed for a quick ending, doesn't it? And these were only the surface manifestations. Beneath the storm of politics were the social upheavals: the breakup of families as children left home to seek better lands in the west, or as family members quarreled over politics; the abuses of freedom, from excessive drinking and gambling to dueling and rioting; the mounting tensions over slavery, tensions which were already creating new regional and cultural divisions in the country. America was coming unglued.

That the young nation not only managed to survive this critical period but to flourish, expand, and become a mighty continental power is testimony to an American genius for reaching beyond differences to find the sources of unity. But what were those sources? What made America stick together through an extremely critical period in its history? Three recent works by

American historians shed light on these questions, first by describing the diverse, often conflicting energies unleashed in America during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, then by giving us some glimpses of what finally helped to control those energies.

The first of these books, Jon Butler's *Becoming America: The Revolution before 1776* (Harvard University Press, 320 pp., \$27.95), is a sweeping view of British North America in the period 1680-1776. The setting looks serene today: the rolling landscape, the gabled houses, the white-steepled churches. What in fact was happening, Butler writes, was "a revolution that utterly transformed the original seventeenth-century British colonies, marking the creation of the first modern society in Britain's colonies before independence." A huge leap in transatlantic trade produced a corresponding increase in the standard of living, evident in everything from furniture to diet. (At the time of the Revolution, American soldiers were on average 3 to 3.5 inches taller than the British Royal Marines.) Literacy rates, especially in New England, far exceeded those anywhere in Europe, and these, together with a flourishing economy and a proliferation of newspapers, helped turn the country into what Butler calls "a raucous political hothouse."

Butler's book is fact-laden, so much so that it takes some effort to perceive its larger themes. The one that stands out most clearly is his account of the growing social diversity in America, which began early in the eighteenth century. We tend to think of the colonists as British, but it was Germans who constituted the largest European immigrant group between 1710 and 1770; at least 85,000 of them had arrived, along with significant numbers of Scots, Swiss, Swedes, and French. And Africans: from 1770 down to the American Revolution there were more African immigrants (involuntary, to

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be sure) than all European immigrants combined. Ten percent died in passage, and most of those who landed didn't live long, but by 1760 African slaves constituted almost 40 percent of Virginia's population and more than two-thirds of South Carolina's. There were slaves in the North, too, but in few Northern states did they amount to more than 10 percent of the population. (In Massachusetts they barely exceeded 2 percent.) Because of slavery, Southern farmers were much wealthier than their Middle or Northern counterparts; sectional rivalries thus began as a result of what was rapidly becoming the South's "peculiar institution."

What about opposition to slavery? Butler gives little attention to this question. We know from other sources, including the two other books under review, that the force most subversive of slavery was religion. Some secular republicans realized that there was something a little strange about demanding liberty while keeping people in chains, but others insisted that that was just the point: they didn't want to be treated the way they treated blacks! It took Christianity to turn the discussion from whiggish liberties to the deeper question of human brotherhood. The first antislavery tract in America, written by a Puritan named Samuel Sewall, compared slavery to the selling of Joseph into bondage by his brothers. That was the message carried to the public by Christian evangelicals and Quakers.

Butler's discussion of religion appears largely within the theme of diversity: what fascinates him is the sheer number and variety of religious groups. Here his documentation is exhaustive, perhaps at times excessive. ("About 110 Protestant congregations had been established in New England by the first Puritans before 1680. But 80 more congregations were organized there between 1680 and 1710 alone, 300 were added between 1710 and 1740, and another 400 . . .") At one point he starts to discuss traditional African religions in America, but then acknowledges "how little evidence exists that documents traditional African religious practice in Britain's mainland colonies." This leads him to infer that an "African spiritual holocaust" must have occurred. He dismisses the possibility that the African religions themselves may have lacked whatever it took to survive competition with Christianity, for those religions "bore breathtakingly expansive worldviews, theories of causality, systems of moral obligation, and supernatural vitality." Then, having piqued our curiosity about those vital and expansive religions, he drops the subject.

Butler spends little time discussing the social effects of religion, apparently because he doesn't think that there were many. There was a spate of church-building—"the sacralization of the landscape," he calls it—but that was more than matched, he thinks, by the sec-

ularization of public discourse. The rhetoric of the time had its "origins" in religion and reflected "a kind of generic Protestantism," but was conducted on the basis of arguments "characteristic of the secular eighteenth-century Enlightenment." His evidence for this generalization is thin. He makes a fleeting reference to "many authors, including those who wrote for New York's *Independent Reflector*," and, in an earlier section, singles out John Adams as typical of those New Englanders who transformed their religion from the Puritan "conversion experience" to Enlightenment "civic morality." Left out of account is the huge deposit of eighteenth-century pulpit oratory, from that of patriots like Samuel Langdon to the (often ill-received) Tory sermons of Jonathan Boucher and others. These sermons were based not on "civic morality" but on biblical Christianity, the religion of about 95 percent of Americans at that time. If the patriots fighting at Lexington and Concord were reading anything, it was most likely not Locke or Sydney but the Bible, the Catechism, Watt's Psalms and Hymns, and the Almanac.

Nevertheless, Butler's account of religion among political elites in the eighteenth century sounds about right. While few were actually Deists, their references to God tended to be rather distant and formal. God was "Divine Providence," "the Creator," or, in the ambiguous phrasing of the Declaration of Independence, "Nature and Nature's God." The social utility of religion was readily acknowledged. George Washington insisted that religion was one of the two "great pillars of human happiness," the other being morality; and morality could not prevail "in exclusion of religious principle." Even Ben Franklin abandoned Deism after concluding that it was not morally "useful." But to find political discourse conveyed in a specifically Christian narrative we must either go back to the previous century or go forward to the next, when the leaven of revivalism had worked its way into American culture.

Butler's book provides a useful account of forces in America set in motion early in the eighteenth century: the kaleidoscopic movement of nationalities and religions, the rapid growth of the economy, the new passion for display, the regional tensions, the tumultuous politics facilitated by newspapers and taverns. What the book does not tell us is what it was that finally contained these forces. For insights into that we can start with Dee Andrews' account of the Methodists in America during the eighteenth century (*The Methodists and Revolutionary America, 1760-1800*, Princeton University Press, 352 pp., \$59.50). As Andrews notes, historians have tended to lump together all the evangelicals participating in the Second Great Awakening, a series of religious revivals that began in the early 1800s. But Methodism deserves pride of place. By 1800 there

were more Methodists than the followers of any other religious group in America, and the middle years of the nineteenth century were dubbed “the Methodist Age” by informed religious observers.

Though founded by an Englishman, John Wesley, as an Anglican missionary society, Methodism was always somehow involved in America. Wesley, who began as a devout Anglican priest, was sent to Georgia in 1735 to head a missionary society. Another early American influence on Wesley was a book by Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*. Edwards, the famous New England theologian and preacher associated with the First Great Awakening, persuaded Wesley that the ecstatic outbursts of religious “enthusiasts” were truly the work of the Holy Spirit.

Still, Methodism did not get off to a promising start in America. Wesley’s missionary work did not go well (after two years he returned to England), and he opposed American independence, which alienated American patriots during the Revolution. By 1784, however, he was thoroughly reconciled to an independent America, and within ten years after the close of the war, Methodism had adapted itself to the new nation more successfully than any other religion.

How did it happen, Andrews asks, that a British missionary society with little sympathy for American independence ended up with so many American adherents? Her answer seems to be that Methodism did a better job than any other religion in adapting itself to the conditions of America and its yearnings. What most distinguished Methodism from other kinds of Protestantism was its “missionary core,” which gave it an “unparalleled structure for continental expansion.” Tanned Methodist circuit-riders, their saddlebags bulging with clothes, medicines, and hymnals, carried evangelism to the edges of the frontier, while in the growing cities of the East, Methodist chapels were crowded with laborers, artisans, slaves, and manumitted freemen. Methodism was a religion of the upward-aspiring at a time when “self-improvement” was itself almost a religion in America. Unlike the earlier Puritans, Methodists did not spend much time in brooding self-examination. Their free-will theology—the one Anglican inheritance they preserved—encouraged them to take control of their lives, and, notwithstanding the shouts and “groanings” of Methodist camp meetings, their denomination soon became associated with sobriety and respectability.

Did Methodism help to bring the nation together? Andrews does not directly raise this question, but I think her answer to it would be a qualified yes. In some respects Methodism was a divisive religion. Andrews describes a number of cases in which Methodist conversions challenged old patterns of deference within

families, creating conflict between parents and children, husbands and wives. The Methodists’ early opposition to slavery, even though it was later toned down, widened another kind of division, this one between North and South.

Yet there were powerfully binding forces in the Methodist faith. It was a “big tent” religion (a particularly apt metaphor, since its outdoor meetings were often conducted in large tents); it welcomed blacks and women into its ranks, and even elevated some to leadership positions; later, when some congregations attempted to marginalize blacks, independent black Methodist churches were formed. The ambition of Methodism was also broad and inclusive. Its goal, said one of its promoters, was to “reform the continent and spread scripture-holiness over these lands.” It reached out to people with little or no religious experience—people, Andrews writes, “as unmoored from past traditions as republican radicals like Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson hoped Americans would be”—and brought them back into the Christian fold. Methodists were horrified by the dechristianizing campaign of the French Revolution, even though its target was the hated Catholic Church, and they helped to forge the American synthesis—which has always amazed French observers—of progressive politics and religious piety.

Inheriting the Revolution (Harvard University Press, 320 pp., \$26), historian Joyce Oldham Appleby’s account of the generation of Americans born between 1776 and 1800, expands on some of the points made by Butler and Andrews. Where Butler writes about pluralism in pre-revolutionary America, Appleby tells us about pluralism run amok among the generation born after the Revolution. She cites DeWitt Clinton’s lament that a “violent spirit has split society asunder, has poisoned the intercourse of private life, has spread gloom over our literature, has infected the national taste, and has palsied the general prosperity.” America had broken with England, but now it seemed to many that the nation itself was falling apart, dissolving into warring factions. Looking back on those times, Appleby asks: “Could a people split into a dozen religions, shedding the social forms that separated mechanics from militia majors, divided between native-born and naturalized citizens, ever unify? And if so, on which and whose terms?” To the first question we know the answer. To the second question her answer is that in large measure the terms were set by evangelical Christianity.

The political radicals of the late eighteenth century made their own contribution to American democracy by establishing a system designed “to include most white men and a few black ones in the citizenry.” But then they “rested on their oars.” The task of pulling

together the diverse groups within the new nation was undertaken by the leaders of the religious revival movements of the early nineteenth century, and they did it by infusing "their Christian morals into Americans' public and personal lives." Appleby writes evocatively about the role of the religious revivals in "arousing the slumbering spiritual longings of Americans," awakening them "to the Christian message of love and change." "Husbands and wives," she notes, "drew closer together in communities of strangers; slaves found comfort, as did many others, in the promises held out by those who claimed Jesus as their Lord."

It was not all sweetness and light. Like Andrews, Appleby notes that the new churches "played havoc with families," sometimes setting spouses and siblings against one another, "and most threateningly, the young against the old." Yet, also like Andrews, Appleby thinks that the end result of the revival movement was to provide a "moral compass" for believers, "an instrument of rare utility in a society with so much uncharted terrain." Despite all the Christian denominations, she says, they were held in a common Protestant orthodoxy, an orthodoxy not of doctrine but of culture.

Evangelical Protestants had converged on the same values. They all sought a Christian America awakened to its missionary destiny and promoted a common set of qualities in their converts: they all wanted piety expressed in virtuous habits and good faith.

Those directly touched by the revivals of the early 1800s amounted to a quarter of the nation, but their values permeated the larger society, pulling it together at a time when politics threatened to tear it apart. Evangelical Christianity did not spare the nation its worst rupture in the 1860s. But when the Civil War was all but over and it came time "to bind up the nation's wounds," Abraham Lincoln spoke not of law or of rights but of reconciliation, healing, and renewal—the language of the revivals.

Taken together, the three books probe some of the thorniest questions of American identity. What *was* America, and what made it America? What stamped this country with the unique, identifiable character that we call American? What Butler highlights is young America's astounding record of growth, modernization, and social diversification; these combined features, he suggests, are what distinguished America from other nations in the world. But what kind of glue held it all together?

Some might say that the question is meaningless, or at least unnecessary. They would contend that America did not have to have any grand principle of unity

beyond the desire of its people to find a decent life for themselves. That seemed to be the view of Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, a Frenchman who lived in America for a time in the eighteenth century and later wrote *Notes from an American Farmer*. Like Butler, he was impressed by the sheer diversity of the new land. ("I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations.") What held the country together? Self-interest, he answered, made possible by "indulgent laws" that allowed people to work hard and prosper. But what happened when these self-interested folk started bumping into each other? What happened when, as DeWitt Clinton put it, colliding factions threatened to "split society asunder"? Didn't the nation need some unifying principles?

For secular-minded republicans, the answer has always been: yes, the nation needed principles, and it had (and has) them. James Madison pointed to the principle of checks and balances and the commitment to a large republic, both designed to control the effects of faction. Other principles commonly embraced by Americans include constitutionalism, free speech, majority rule, minority rights, honesty, fair play, and equality of opportunity. Weren't—and aren't—these values enough to hold America together, or at least to keep its conflicts from getting out of hand?

The only problem here, as Appleby intimates, is that these principles don't grip the hearts of ordinary people. They are splendid concepts, but they don't go deeply enough, they don't tap the elemental juices. If people hate one another, republican virtues aren't going to bring them together; more likely they will become strategic weapons. So, for example, if one side loses under majority rule, it will invoke the principle of minority rights and carry the fight to the courts. Even a common commitment to equality is not enough to bridge angry differences over race relations in America—as is evident today in affirmative action controversy, where each side claims the mantle of civil rights. The mucilage for holding society together has to be made of thicker stuff than civic idealism.

In Appleby's view, and perhaps in Andrews', what finally brought Americans together in the early 1800s was evangelical Protestantism. Here was a faith that reached directly into the hearts of millions and then spread into the general culture. It was a religion not of dogmas and rituals but of ecstatic, life-changing experiences, and it packed enough emotional punch to break through longstanding social barriers—people usually seen as "the others" now could be called "brothers" and "sisters." Moreover, it gave Americans a common, austere morality that kept freedom from degenerating into license, prompting Alexis de Toc-

queville, who had visited America in the 1830s, to remark that “while the law allows the American people to do everything, there are things which religion prevents them from imagining and forbids them to dare.”

We know the shortcomings of evangelical Protestantism. It often fell short of its promise of interracial brotherhood. In recounting his life as a slave, Frederick Douglass claimed that his master became especially abusive every time he came back from a revival meeting (although, as Andrews notes, Douglass himself worshipped at a Methodist chapel in Baltimore before escaping to the North). The evangelicals were also less than charitable toward fellow Christians of the Roman Catholic persuasion. Their blind hatred of “popery” put them on a collision course with the masses of Irish who arrived in the 1840s and ’50s. The evangelicals’ initial indifference to higher education put them on a different sort of collision course, this one with the scientific community, that culminated a century later in foolish campaigns against the teaching of evolution.

In recent times, evangelical Protestantism has demonstrated its resilience and adaptability. Without sacrificing its core beliefs, it has broadened its appeal and made common cause with other groups, including Catholics. Its participation in these broader coalitions shouldn’t surprise us, since many of the developments in modern America that are morally troubling to evangelicals are just as troubling to many other Americans. Is it possible, then, that there might be some new, more ecumenical “awakening” that could emerge from these shared concerns? No, not when it is put that way. Stirrings of the spirit can’t be conjured up by moral reformers. Still, we know that these stirrings have occurred a number of times in the past (by some counts, there were four “Great Awakenings”), and we have no reason to think that there won’t be more in the future. While their etiology will always elude us, it appears that they arrive during periods of turmoil, confusion, and drift, and that they leave only after they have deepened America’s moral understanding of itself. Perhaps, then, Americans have not yet finished “becoming America.” FT

Ivy Pretends

Ivy pretends
To grow in whimsy,
Perpendicular, accidental,
Tendrils right, left.
Unawed by granite,
Ivy scales, claims the top,
Extends, droops,
Flutters downward,
Deceptively pliant,
Knowing, greenly:
Growth is never
Whimsy

Cleo Griffith

Another Face of the Priesthood

Earl Boyea

That there is a crisis in the Catholic priesthood is by now something that “everybody knows.” But new discussions of old questions are sparked from time to time, often by the publication of a book. Such is the case with *The Changing Face of the Priesthood: A Reflection on the Priest’s Crisis of Soul* (Liturgical Press) by Father Donald Cozzens, Rector of St. Mary Seminary and Graduate School in Cleveland, Ohio. According to Fr. Cozzens, the changing face of the priesthood is very grim indeed, and his argument has sparked a great deal of discussion.

Fr. Cozzens frankly acknowledges that his book is impressionistic. His reflection, he writes in the preface, “is grounded in and shaped by my own experience as a priest, especially by more than a half dozen years of service as vicar for clergy in the Diocese of Cleveland and more recently as rector of our graduate seminary. . . . The experiences and reflections of many priests, I am quite sure, will lead them to see a different picture than the one I outline in the pages ahead.” Precisely.

My own experience of thirteen years in seminary work in Detroit and now as Rector of the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio, suggests a very different picture. Put differently, I recognize many of the problems discussed by Fr. Cozzens, but I believe that, at least in some cases, he frames the problem in a way that is, no doubt inadvertently, profoundly misleading.

For instance, Fr. Cozzens addresses the “identity” of the priest in terms of what he describes as a shift following the Second Vatican Council from a “cultic” model to a model of the “servant leader.” This shift was precipitated by the Council’s emphasis on the fuller realization of the priesthood of the laity. There should

be, says Fr. Cozzens, a “dyadic” relationship between the priesthood of the faithful and that of the ordained. His greatest concern is that the “dyad” malfunctions when the ordained ministry of “servant leader” fails to be fully engaged with the ministry of the people.

Of course that can happen, and when it does, it is a real problem. Another problem, however, is the collapse of the dyad when the difference that ordination makes is obscured or forgotten. It is precisely the cultic nature of ordained priesthood that prevents such a collapse. Priestly identity is most fundamentally derived from the sacramental grace of ordination at the hands of the bishop. For many people, the word “cultic” has negative connotations that load the discussion. We are speaking about sacramentality, and sacramentality is what, most importantly, defines the priesthood. Priestly identity may be existentially experienced in different ways, but surely we can agree that the most important factor in the priest’s sense of who he is is his relationship with Jesus Christ, whom he makes sacramentally present. Apart from this sustaining sacramental reality, the ordained priesthood simply makes no sense.

At seminary conferences and elsewhere, one regularly hears the lament that younger priests and seminarians today are not as socially engaged as priests ordained in the decades immediately after the Council. These younger men, we are told, are too conservative, or too rigid, or too interested in orthodoxy. They are, it is said, a throwback to the excessively “cultic” priesthood prior to the Council. I am sorry, that is simply not my experience. Nor, incidentally, do I accept the conventional caricature of the priesthood before the Council. Of course there are exceptions, as there will always be, but the seminarians and younger priests whom I know represent not a regression but a new syn-

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thesis of, to use Fr. Cozzens' terms, the cultic and the servant leader. For instance, seminarians today are more interested in urban ministries, in meeting human needs, and, very specifically, in learning Spanish than was the case when I was in seminary. Yet they are also remarkably devout and eager to understand the truth of the gospel—call it orthodoxy, if you wish—so that they can effectively communicate in an often neo-pagan society the reason for the hope that is in them (1 Peter 3:15). Of course the sacraments, the spiritual life, and the truth of the gospel have priority. That is simply to say that Jesus Christ has priority, and there is no other foundation for engaging the world as a priest—or as a Christian, for that matter.

Fr. Cozzens discusses at length what he views as attacks on the integrity of the priest as a human being, among which he includes the tension between the strict teachings of the Church and the more pastoral disposition of priests' own consciences. He quotes Fr. Bernard Häring on the problem created "when religious authorities demand all too much submission to an obscure package of doctrines." To be sure, I have felt at times, and I suppose most priests have felt at times, a tension between Church teaching and my own pastoral sensibilities when working with the real problems of people. I take that as a signal that I need to understand the teaching more thoroughly. Let me say it quite flatly: my presumption is not that I am right but that the Church is right. Christ made no individual promise to me that the Spirit would lead me into all truth; he did not give to me the keys of the kingdom. These are promises made to the Church, the Body of Christ, of which I am a member not as an equal but as a servant.

That is not, according to Fr. Cozzens, the attitude of a healthy priest. The healthy priest, he writes, "possesses the courage to stand in loyal opposition should official Church policy appear unfaithful to the gospel of Christ." At the very least, one might suggest that opposition should be limited to when one "knows" (how would one know for sure?) that Church policy is unfaithful to Christ, not to when it "appears" to be so. Moreover, "loyal opposition" is a political term usually used for the party that is out of power. Is that the model for a healthy priest? Why would one be ordained, solemnly vowing to devote his life to the service of the Church, while expecting to oppose the leadership of the Church? Healthier, it seems to me, is Paul's admonition that we be of one mind and one heart.

Fr. Cozzens says that the Church is indifferent to the "data" regarding problems such as the vocation shortage, the graying of the clergy, rampant homosexuality among priests (more on that later), the birth control dispute, and calls for married priests and women in

ministry. Manifestly, the Church is not indifferent to these questions. At every level of the Church's life, they are endlessly discussed. Just because the Church does not change its teachings or practices does not mean that such questions are being ignored. Might it not be at least seemly for those who agitate for change to entertain the possibility that the Magisterium understands the problems as well as they do, or even that the Magisterium is right and they are wrong about how these problems are to be understood and addressed?

On the sociological and psychological front, Fr. Cozzens makes much of his claim that a complicating factor in priestly integrity is that younger clergy have more "family of origin" problems than those of the past. Of course there are seminarians who have difficulties with their fathers, and that may contribute to their having a problem with authority figures. Without presuming to speak for clergy who are older than I, my sense is that that may also be true for priests ordained in, say, the 1960s. I believe an argument can be made that, by the usual psychological criteria, today's seminarians are healthier than their predecessors. Psychological counseling and spiritual formation programs are much more probing and exacting than was the case in former times.

As for the family of origins theory, over the past decade I have kept a record of the seminary admissions cases in which I have been involved. Like Fr. Cozzens, I do not claim this is an "empirical, scientific perspective," but the fact is that over 90 percent of admissions have come from intact Catholic families: no divorce, both parents Catholic, and an average of just under five siblings. This is not to say that there are no problems in these families. What family does not have problems? At first I thought this might be a peculiarity of Sacred Heart in Detroit, but I have now gone through my first admissions process here at the Josephinum and the statistics are the same. Living and working with seminarians for thirteen years, I simply do not see the massive family "dysfunction" that Fr. Cozzens depicts.

Fr. Cozzens has true and important things to say about celibacy, about the problem of priestly loneliness and the need for friendship and intimacy. He understands that today's therapeutic society, in which everyone is presumably entitled to complete happiness here on earth, works against the gospel call for self-sacrifice. He writes of the priest: "The deeper his love for God, the greater his capacity for human love and friendship. Conversely, the more authentic his celibate relationships are, the more central and self-defining his love for God." This insight, he says, needs to be deepened in the formation of priests, and I wholeheartedly agree. In fact, today's seminarians get more formation with respect to their relationships, with God and with oth-

ers, than most anybody on the face of the earth. But, as Fr. Cozzens notes, that is also necessary, for these men serve in a society marked by powerful forces militating against the gift and challenge of celibacy.

Less convincing, however, is Fr. Cozzens' claim that a big problem facing today's priest is the paucity of good role models living the celibate life. Admittedly, the number of men and women in our society committed to the celibate life is relatively small. But I am impressed by the many priests I know who are confidently and joyfully, albeit with the normal struggles and difficulties, celibate. At work in Fr. Cozzens' alarmist view is, I expect, a preoccupation with an unrealistic model of health and maturity.

Unless one has reached this level of health and maturity, Fr. Cozzens suggests, he cannot be a happy celibate priest. But who in this life achieves such a model? Because a man and woman do not perfectly conform to contemporary criteria of health and maturity does not mean that they cannot enter upon a valid sacramental marriage that is happy and fruitful. We should not set up for either marriage or celibacy qualifications so extraordinary that they exceed the reach of mortals. Of course faithful celibacy is not effortless, just as fidelity is not easy for the married. Married or celibate, chastity is hard work sustained by grace.

Fr. Cozzens ventures into deep water in a chapter titled "Facing the Unconscious," where he employs the Oedipal Complex to explain why priests are the way they are. He suggests that the priest is the son, the bishop is the father, the Church is the mother, and other priests are siblings. Each priest is competing for the attention and affection of the bishop. (Following the Oedipal image, one might expect the priest to be bent upon romancing the mother and killing the bishop.) According to this reading, the priest vies for the bishop's attention by being either a sycophant or a maverick. Both tactics betray an authority problem rooted in the priest's difficulties with his birth father. And so forth.

Of course sycophancy and rebelliousness are present in the priesthood. We all know such priests, and they are usually the most obvious characters. I doubt if we need an elaborately psychologized explanatory framework to understand why some priests have problems with authority. In most cases, sin is explanation enough—for instance, envy, pride, willfulness, and the sloth that undermines our doing what we know we should do. Fr. Cozzens, however, would have us see a dysfunctional, even pathological, Roman authority that is joined by enabling bishops in victimizing priests who, because of their own vulnerabilities or pathologies, are susceptible to being victimized. That is what one might see if one were set upon seeing it, and had

dismissed the explanatory power of individual propensity for sinful behavior.

Too many priests, says Fr. Cozzens, are living out the "eternal boy" or narcissistic syndrome, expecting others to take care of them. He is undoubtedly right about that, as he is right in proposing the alternative that is a gift of self in service to God and others. For Fr. Cozzens, however, the paradigm of that alternative is the married man with a mortgage and other anxieties that produce maturity. Most priests whom I know have responsibilities as great or greater than those of most married men, and experience no end of demands on their time and energy—demands that act as powerful forces in producing maturity. The life of a priest is no less exigent than that of other people, and is frequently more so. Of course priests are freed from some anxieties about their own personal well-being in order to give themselves more fully to their ministry. That is something to be received with gratitude, although, as with all freedoms, it is attended by temptations. People, married and celibate, sometimes succumb to temptation. That is not an indictment of either marriage or celibacy. It is the reality for which there is the remedy of repentance, forgiveness, and, by the grace of God, faithfulness renewed.

For Fr. Cozzens, the problems lie elsewhere: in dysfunctional structures, in complex psychological dynamics, and, as he puts it at one point, in "the fear and mistrust so evident in the curial offices of the Vatican, the sinfulness of the Church itself." One almost gets the impression that Fr. Cozzens is a modern day Daniel reading the handwriting on the wall at Nebuchadnezzar's banquet and declaring that God has weighed the Church in the balance and found her wanting. The gates of hell have prevailed after all. This impression carries over into the most controversial part of the book, that dealing with sexual orientation.

Fr. Cozzens claims that statistics show that 50 percent of priests and seminarians are homosexually oriented. A gay culture in the priesthood or seminary, he says, makes it very awkward for heterosexuals, who as a consequence doubt their vocations and withdraw. Seminaries must therefore consider the kind of support that is needed for heterosexual seminarians in a gay culture. We are not told whether the prevalence of homosexual orientation and gay expression is bad or good. Fr. Cozzens seems to suggest that it is simply a fact of life with which we must learn to live. This is very unpersuasive on a number of scores.

First, I do not believe the statistics. The very few surveys and studies that have been done on homosexuality among priests are almost certainly flawed by the factor of self-selection. Those who, for whatever reason, are interested in homosexuality among priests

respond at a far higher rate than others. Had I received a questionnaire in such a survey, I would not have responded. As for Fr. Cozzens' depiction of seminarians, I can only say that they must be very different from those whom I have known during fourteen years of seminary work. Are there seminarians who identify themselves as homosexual? Certainly. Are there some who are sexually confused and in need of counseling and spiritual direction? Absolutely. But is there a dominant homosexual culture in seminaries that makes life difficult, if not impossible, for heterosexuals? That does not jibe with my experience.

It is very possible that in the 1970s and '80s there were a significant number of seminarians who were sexually confused, and were encouraged in that confusion by a sexually charged society. They were not challenged to harmonize their ideas and their lives with the teaching of the Church, and today some of them are priests. Some are effective and faithfully celibate, while some are actively involved in the gay subculture. The latter pose a very real problem, but the incidence of the problem, I am convinced, is nowhere near the figure proffered by Fr. Cozzens. His claims are both unsupported and irresponsible.

Fr. Cozzens is surely right about the horror of priests engaged in pedophilia and pederasty, but he is wrong about the Church not being open to discussing the problem. It has been the subject of non-stop discussion in recent years. One has to wonder whether "openness" here does not mean readiness to change the Church's discipline regarding celibacy, a

change that would not resolve the problem since, in fact, pederasty is more commonly committed by married men. On the basis of my years of study and experience, it is evident that there is no psychological test or screening program that can reliably identify potential pedophiles among either the celibate or the married. Those of us responsible for the formation of seminarians can only be ever alert to signs of deviance, and ever faithful in communicating the Church's teachings and expectations.

Fr. Cozzens concludes that there are five crises that are changing the face of the priesthood: the relationship between priests and bishops, the shortage of vocations, the gay ascendancy, the crisis of authority, and, finally, what he calls the crisis of intellect. By the last he means that priests do not have the time and energy to study and think things through, with the result that they do not really internalize the teachings that they unreflectively repeat. No sensible person should deny that these are five problems, along with other problems, affecting the priesthood today. But crises? I think not. To say that they are perennial problems is not to say that they are not urgent. Each generation must address them with urgency and imagination. Alarmism and exaggeration are no help in that task. Another book providing a more accurate and balanced depiction of the priesthood might not get as much attention as *The Changing Face of the Priesthood*, but it would be most welcome. Meanwhile, I suppose that those of us who are immeasurably grateful to be engaged in the high adventure of faith that is the priesthood will have to communicate the message by our lives. ^[FT]

Books In Review

All Too Human

ACTS OF FAITH: EXPLAINING THE HUMAN SIDE OF RELIGION. By RODNEY STARK and ROGER FINKE. *University of California Press.* 350 pp. \$48 cloth, \$18.95 paper.

Reviewed by Steve Bruce

THERE IS A GREAT deal to be said for grand mistakes, clearly and prolifically expounded; they force us to think. Rodney Stark's rational choice theory of religion has energized the social scientific study of religion by being big and wrong. Where others have set themselves the humbler task of trying to explain this or that aspect of religious belief or behavior, Stark stands out by emulating Marx, Durkheim, and Freud in proposing a grand theory of religion, which he and his colleague Roger Finke set forth clearly and succinctly in their summa, *Acts of Faith*.

In the 1970s Stark argued for a model of religious behavior based on rewards and compensators. People seek rewards but usually cannot get them and so are in the market for compensators. Religious compensators triumph over secular ones because they can invoke God and make promises about the next world. Since the desire for rewards always outstrips their availability, the demand for religion will be a constant. Hence long-run secularization is impossible. In the 1980s Stark became attracted by the economics of the Chicago school, which argued

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that models of human behavior that assumed a desire to "maximize" (if you can buy the same box of cornflakes in two outlets at a different price, you buy the cheapest) worked not just for the traditional concerns of economists but for all types of human action. Including religion.

One application of rational choice theory to religion concentrated on the microeconomics of human action, producing such gems as the claim that couples who shared a common religion went to church more often than couples who differed in religion because such church involvement is cheaper (you only need one car). There are, of course, more obvious explanations. The causal connection could be the other way round: committed believers are more likely to want to marry within their faith than waverers. Or the link could be strength of belief: a same-religion couple will reinforce each other's beliefs.

MORE PLAUSIBLY, rational choice was applied to the religious complexion of societies. Starting from Tocqueville's observation that France had a single dominant religion that was only weakly supported while America had a plurality of competing sects and a vibrant religious culture, "supply-side" economists argued that, just as competition is virtuous in driving down prices, improving products, and increasing consumption in such material matters as the market for cars, so too is it virtuous in religion. Apparent differences in the religiosity of various societies were not to be explained (as sociologists had traditionally assumed) by differences in the demand for religion or in social circumstances that made religious beliefs more or less plausible. As Stark had argued, the demand for religion was a constant. Differences in religious cultures therefore were to be explained by the structure of the market and the nature of the supply of religious products. Diversity and

competition were good; religious monopoly (especially when supported by the state) was bad.

One problem in assessing this radical and iconoclastic treatment of religion is that, beyond general impressions, the evidence is difficult to judge, and of necessity much of the critical response to Stark and Finke's work has been so technical as to exclude anyone who does not comprehend multivariate statistical analysis. Suffice it to say that, although Stark and a small group of acolytes have been highly productive, the general weight of research publication has been against them. Even for the United States, which has provided the evidence closest to Stark's claims, church involvement has generally been greatest in times and places where there has been the least diversity, not the most. And an acquaintance with the world beyond the United States quickly undermines the plausibility of a universal link between competitive markets in religious products and the popularity of religion. One only has to look at the history of resistance to communism in Eastern Europe to appreciate that it was the overwhelmingly Catholic countries (Poland and Lithuania, for example) that remained most religious.

Stark and his colleagues are fond of claiming that there is little published refutation of their supply-side theories. Not only is this self-aggrandizing claim factually incorrect, it misses the larger point that the vast majority of historians, sociologists, and political scientists ignore their work because they know that it cannot encompass the complexity of the real life of Bulgaria or Ireland or Australia.

Even if we somehow persuade ourselves that we can leave aside history and politics and explain human action by the autonomous choices of maximizing individuals, there is still the problem that opportunities for "choice" are not easy to identify or measure, and hence compare. It may appear that the United States has a

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greater variety of religious products than, say, England, but much of that apparent difference is a result of the U.S. having duplicate ethnic and linguistic variants of the same religious tradition. If an American town has a German and a Swedish Lutheran church and a black and a white Baptist church, it may well have greater diversity than an English town with only an Anglican and a Methodist church, but it is hardly sensible to see the U.S. town as offering more choice to most of its citizens.

EVEN THOSE OF US who are skeptical of Stark's thesis will nonetheless find much to agree with in the enormous array of propositions that Stark and Finke develop, and this collection is worth reading for those nuggets of good sense. The disagreement comes when the reasonable points are claimed as support for an implausible general theory. For example, in this volume Stark again repeats the various deficiencies of a church supported out of public taxation. If the clergy do not have to win and keep a congregation in order to live, they will not bother. Familiarity with Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Chronicles* will provide many supporting examples of clerics who took the income from their many benefices, paid a fraction of it to miserable curates to do their work for them, and headed off to the warmer climes of Italy.

But do such examples confirm a general theory? Does Rodney Stark publish only for the money? Would he be happy to be paid well but have no students enroll for his classes and have no audience for his guest seminars? Such narrowness of motivation is precisely what he imputes to Scandinavian Lutheran clerics. There seems no space here for any notion of being called, or driven by ideology, or concerned to save souls.

While treating religion as if it were a product like any other can generate fresh insights, such reductionism in the end destroys the theory because it

ignores too much that we know of religion. For most people religion is not a matter of choice in which opportunities to maximize or economize can be sought. Most people are born into a particular religion and so thoroughly socialized in it that alternatives are not economizing opportunities, but implausible heresies. A Ford tractor dealer whose sales decline can switch to a John Deere dealership. If agribusiness goes down the tubes, he can get into cars or even sell his lot for a housing development. The Calvinist Free Presbyterians of Scotland's Hebrides know that their faith is declining in popularity and they can argue amongst themselves about what small changes might make it more attractive, but they cannot announce a return to Rome.

THE POINT CAN be seen very clearly in how believers deal with failure. They persuade themselves that everyone else is too mired in sin to hear God's truth. When the Ford motor company realized that the Edsel was a dog, it did not persist in making it and console itself with the view that the ordinary Joe was too dumb to know a good car when he saw one. It dropped the Edsel and started again.

Rational choice works well for cars because the car market has features that are mostly absent from the world of religion: there is widespread demand for the general product; brand loyalty is relatively weak; car choices are largely free from ethnic, racial, or national constraints; few people get ostracized, or even shot or raped, because they switch models. In addition, we can make rational choices between cars because the rewards (seat comfort, speed, fuel economy, and the like) are fairly readily identifiable and comparable, as is the cost. But in this life I cannot know whether it is Islam, Catholicism, or snake-handling fundamentalism that will guarantee eternal salvation. In a nutshell, rational choice does not work for religion because there are enormous

constraints on choice and because the information required to make the choice rational is not available.

This is not to say that religious choices are irrational, as Stark alleges the other approaches must assume. Here, as in so many other elements of his approach, Stark enhances the plausibility of his approach by falsifying the alternatives. In fact, the other explanations for religious behavior simply have a broader notion of what counts as sensible grounds for belief (such as having been taught certain things by parents and others one trusts and having found them a sufficient guide to a pleasant life). Indeed, a very general criticism of Stark's work is that he does not deal fairly with scholars who disagree with him.

For example, he repeatedly summarizes the secularization thesis (which supposes that various features of modernization in certain settings combine to reduce the plausibility of religious ideas and practices) with the same quotation from an undergraduate textbook written in 1966 by an anthropologist. Marx is cited to stand for the work of hundreds of us who have never been influenced in the least by the man. Scholars are routinely parodied or assigned views they have clearly disavowed. I am cited, for example, as believing that religion in Northern and Western Europe is "soon to disappear." I certainly believe that mainstream and liberal denominations are in severe trouble, but I have also written extensively on the survival of sects, the appeal of the expressive spirituality of the New Age, and the continued vitality of religion where it is part of contested religio-ethnic identities. Bryan Wilson, like David Martin, if forced to choose one key cause of secularization, would probably cite our modern concern with engineered change and our purported mastery over our fate. He would not, as Stark claims, suggest that "it is science that has the most deadly implications for religion." Science is not even mentioned in Wil-

son's two classics, *Contemporary Transformations of Religion* and *Religion in Secular Society*.

WHAT IS MORE, Stark is unable to admit he has learned from his critics. For example, his early versions of the supply-side propositions permitted no serious qualifications to the centrality of individual choice. After enough of us had said it often enough, he came to accept that many people's ability to economize in religious behavior is indeed heavily constrained. But this concession was slipped into yet another list of propositions with no recognition that its initial absence had any implications for the virtue of the general theory.

These ad hominem criticisms of Stark would be out of place were it not for that fact that his sectarian insistence on dividing the world of serious students of religion into his people and the rest severely limits the value of his scholarship. These essays give us a very clear notion of what Stark thinks, some of which is useful, but we can learn very little from the vast range of sources he cites because we can have little faith in his accounts of the work of others.

A final thought. Stark sees himself as disproving the claim that most modern societies are patently less religious than they once were. Yet if we ask ourselves what sort of society it would be in which people switched

readily between religions as they sought to maximize their utility, the answer would have to be a society in which religion did not much matter.

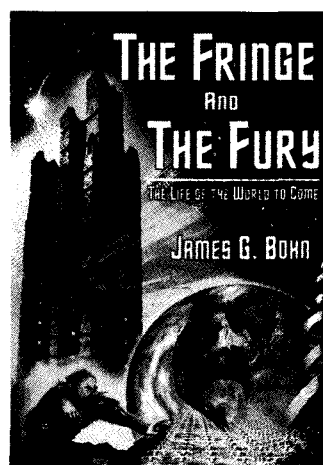
What's Best for the Jews?

THE JEWISH STATE: THE STRUGGLE FOR ISRAEL'S SOUL. By YORAM HAZONY. Basic. 432 pp. \$28.

Reviewed by David Novak

"WHY SHOULD THE JEWISH STATE exist at all?" Until quite recently, there was a ready answer to the basic question Yoram Hazony raises at the beginning of this provocative book: the Jewish state needs to exist in order to provide a homeland for homeless Jews in the world. Indeed, from its very beginnings in late-nineteenth-century Europe, the Zionist movement made its main appeal to Jews and others based on the perpetual vulnerability of the Jewish people. This appeal is epitomized in a famous speech delivered at Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1945 by the late Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver,

DAVID NOVAK holds the J. Richard and Dorothy Shiff Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Toronto.



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leader of the American branch of the world-wide Zionist movement. Before a huge audience that had just recently learned of the Nazi Holocaust, Rabbi Silver eloquently proclaimed that this unprecedented tragedy could not have happened were it not for the homelessness of

the Jewish people. From that time on, Jewish opposition to Zionism was confined to a fringe of religious fanatics on the right and assimilationists on the left. Survival seemed to be reason enough for the existence of a Jewish state. Only anti-Semites could argue against it.

Much of that has now changed. In many places there are still Jews who are in danger; yet one cannot locate any longer a major Jewish community that is in danger of annihilation or cultural extinction. Indeed, despite the lingering Palestinian problem in the land of Israel, no one thinks that the State of Israel is in the type of danger that existed when Egypt and Syria were armed to the teeth by the former Soviet Union. Added to that, one must consider how well Jews are doing in North and South America and Western Europe. There is even a new diaspora—a significant number of Jews who have emigrated from Israel (the Israelis call them *yordim*, roughly, “deserters”). Since fewer Jews now have to live in Israel, Jews today have to decide why they *want* to live in Israel (or why they want other Jews to live in Israel for them).

With the old survivalist reasons no longer readily at hand, Hazony is certainly correct in characterizing his fellow Israeli Jews as “an exhausted people, confused and without direction.” In Israeli parlance, there are two questions: Is the State of Israel to be a “state of the Jews” (*medinat yehudim*) or only a “state of its citizens” (*medinat eзраhim*) whoever they happen to be? But if the State of Israel is to be a state of the Jews, can it finally become a “Jewish state” (*medinah yehudit*), that is, a state whose character is determined by Judaism and not just a state most of whose citizens happen to be Jews?

Hazony, who directs the Shalem Center, a new think tank in Jerusalem, writes so clearly and powerfully that one might have expected from him a solution, or at least the outline of one, to Israel’s existential dilemma. Ultimately, however, *The Jewish State* disappoints; Hazony devotes most of his book not to solutions but to an almost paranoid polemic against the culturally prominent Israeli intellectuals whom he sees as traitors to the idea of a Jewish state for Jews.

Hazony reductively traces virtually all that is wrong with Israeli intellectu-

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al life to its first principles in "German-Jewish anti-Zionist philosophy." This dangerous philosophy, according to the author, was imported to Jewish Palestine (that is, Israel before 1948) by the philosopher Martin Buber (who immigrated in 1938) and his still influential disciples, especially at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a.k.a. "Israel's Harvard."

THOSE FAMILIAR WITH Israeli history and culture will recognize how skillfully Hazony exploits a persistent Israeli prejudice against Jews of German-speaking origin, who are still called, popularly, "yekkes," from the German *Jacke*, meaning a short jacket preferred by westernized German Jews in Europe to the longer, more recognizably Jewish, caftans of the East European Jews. These German Jews have been held in suspicion because the vast majority of them, it is said, really did not want to come to Israel to build a Jewish state, but only did so because they had to flee Nazi persecution after 1933. Many Israelis assume that the majority of Austrian and German Jews in pre-Hitler times wanted to assimilate, and were opposed to Zionism because it offered (for them anyway) a dangerously seductive alternative to assimilation. This assimilationist mentality is thought to explain the "blindness" of German Jews that led so many of them to remain in Europe until it was too late to escape their annihilation.

Hazony plays off this suspicion of German-Jewish assimilationism to suggest that these Jews are intent on making Israel into an ordinary Western state, based on a social contract between autonomous and anonymous individuals. He reduces every major German-speaking thinker who ever addressed the "Jewish question" to this cultural stereotype, which is false in many particulars. For instance, Gershom Scholem, Hugo Bergmann, and Ernst Simon, three of Hazony's targets, came to Israel long before 1933—and for the most ideal-

istic reasons. Hazony lumps together German-Jewish thinkers as philosophically disparate as Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig (both of whom died long before the establishment of the State of Israel), and Hannah Arendt (who never lived or wanted to live in Israel), simply because

they are both German and Jewish.

One would think, given their alienation from Zionism, that these Jews would be rather marginal in Israel. Yet, Hazony argues, these Jews, heirs to the more passive "cultural" Zionism of the Russian Jewish thinker Ahad Ha'Am, became far more

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prominent than their numbers would suggest. That is because, as Hazony with rare objectivity admits, these highly educated and philosophically astute thinkers offered a vision of the State of Israel that appealed to a significant number of intelligent young Israelis who had grown tired of the seemingly mindless romanticism of their pioneering Zionist parents. The earlier generation of Zionists, in the eyes of many of their most sensitive and intelligent offspring, seemed to provide only ethnic myths when political ideas were clearly called for. Martin Buber and his followers provided the ideas for which the emerging Israeli elite hungered. Hazony recognizes the shortcomings of romantic Zionism, but he finds that the ideas provided by these German Jews are antithetical to the idea of a truly Jewish state.

HAZONY SEES this whole German-Jewish outlook—which he implies borders on cultural, even if not immediately political, treason—to have led directly to what is known in Israel today as “post-Zionism.” Some Israeli intellectuals argue that Israel, in order to become a truly “normal” society (ironically, the goal of the early Zionists themselves), should minimize its connection to the worldwide Jewish people and to the Jewish tradition—which is, of course, inseparable from Jewish religion.

In its more radical manifestations, post-Zionism advocates a total break with the Jewish people and with Judaism. Thus the Israeli author David Grossman advocates (in Hazony’s words) “a complete withdrawal from entire regions in our soul . . . such as being . . . a ‘chosen people.’” The most powerful and

influential of these post-Zionists in Israel today is, in Hazony’s view, Aharon Barak (not to be confused with Prime Minister Ehud Barak), the Chief Justice of Israel’s Supreme Court. Barak regards the Jewish tradition, even the Jewish legal tradition (the most developed part of the Jewish tradition), as being little more than a cultural relic, one that is useful only when it affirms “the views of the enlightened community in Israel . . . whose values are universalistic.” Here post-Zionism provides no answer whatsoever as to why there should be a Jewish state. Were this view to be followed, Israel would sever its connection to world Jewry, whose spiritual and material support more than anything else—even more than American financial support—has enabled the State of Israel to survive this long.

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The epitome of this radical break with the Jewish people, which Hazony views with legitimate alarm, is the suggestion by some post-Zionists that Israel's "law of return" be repealed. This law, the first law ever passed by the Israeli parliament, guarantees citizenship in the State of Israel to any Jew from anywhere. More than anything, it has been the basis of the amazing loyalty of world Jewry to the State of Israel. It proclaims to every Jew needing refuge from anti-Semitic persecution that Israel will take him in—unconditionally. To repeal this law would break what might well be the most authoritative covenant among Jews in the world today. I, along with many other Jews, share Hazony's outrage that such treachery is even being suggested by some Israelis.

HAZONY IS RIGHT to expose the danger of this type of Jewish nihilism. But his historical analysis of its origins is simplistically erroneous, and he is either without the will or the ability to propose something more philosophically adequate. But what are the alternatives available to Israelis and Jews in dealing with the question of the *raison d'être* of the State of Israel?

As Hazony explains, there are three basic options: liberal democracy, nationalism, and theocracy. If any of these options were to be fully adopted, it would have to incorporate major features of the others. Thus, liberal democracy would have to take the historical background of Jewish nationhood into consideration, and it would have to deal with the fact that Jewish nationhood and Jewish religion are inextricably bound (the "theological-political" reality of which Spinoza spoke). This, as we have seen, is what Hazony accuses the liberals of not doing. The advocates of theocracy, on the other hand, have shown that they take Jewish nationhood quite seriously (having abandoned the anti-Zionism held by many Orthodox Jews

before 1948), but when it comes to liberal democracy, especially its emphasis on individual rights, the theocrats have proven to be as anti-democratic as the Muslim clerics who now rule Iran. More than anything, this explains the hostility to religion of most secular Israelis. Hazony himself is neither a liberal democrat nor a theocrat. He seems to be a nationalist, often pointing to David Ben-Gurion as his hero. The same question faces him: How can he include theocratic and democratic elements in the Jewish nationalism he advocates?

No Jewish political theory today can ignore the appeal of democracy both to the world and to the Jewish people. Jews' only positive political experience in modernity has been with democracy. Even theocrats and nationalists are forced to make their arguments using democratic rhetoric (however cynically). Yet Hazony is quite vague about the role of democ-

racy in his nationalist project, speaking only of "a noble, uniquely Jewish character and civilization" that makes a contribution to "mankind." I assume by "noble" he means something that would be morally impressive to the world at large. It is hard to see how that civilization could avoid a strong emphasis on personal rights without being taken for one of the many repulsive nationalisms that provoked Israel's creation.

Whereas Hazony's nationalism is vague about democracy, it is downright odious when it comes to religion. Here the original fault lies not with Hazony himself but, rather, with Theodor Herzl and David Ben-Gurion, Hazony's historical heroes. Herzl realized that Jewish nationalism could not dispense with religion. As Hazony puts it, "He assumed religion would have a formal role to play in the Jewish state," and, alongside the military, religious authorities



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would have "important and legitimate functions in the state, so long as they do not usurp the political decision-making process." Indeed, Herzl saw religion in his imagined Jewish state (he died in 1904) as functioning much as religion functioned in Austria and Germany. But in these pre-World War I societies religion was just a yes man, not a transcendent and independent source of moral authority. Recall the automatic "Gott mit uns" ("God with us") religious endorsement of the regime, whatever its moral worth. As the Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz (another Hazon target) pointed out quite dramatically to Ben-Gurion's face, this was like the religion of the "court prophets" of Judah and Israel, religious leaders whom the true prophets Amos and Jeremiah found to be little more than glorified prostitutes speaking in the name of God.

IN THEIR OWN WAY, Buber, Bergmann, Simon, Judah Magnes, and the other German-Jewish thinkers whom Hazon so vilifies and distorts in this book had a religious vision of Jewish

polity, however politically ineffective it may have been in their time. Indeed, that vision might very well have been conditioned by their experience with the unholy alliance of religion and nationalism in imperial Germany, not just Hitler's Germany.

These German Jews knew the dangers of religious nationalism far better than Polish Jews like Ben-Gurion. Their vision of a transcendent religious criterion whereby the state can be both inspired and judged is a good deal more attractive than that of the current religious establishment in Israel. That religious/rabbinical establishment, in return for official status and financial support (which Ben-Gurion offered them from the very beginning in return for their votes and their compliance), has been more than willing to become the religious advocate of the most bellicose nationalism in Israel today. By its self-serving narrowness, it has proven to be the very opposite of the morally inspiring vision of the ancient biblical prophets. Even Hazon has to admit that these rabbis "turned their backs on idea-making." Instead, they simply enhanced their

own power over official rituals, and many of them became convinced that conquest of the whole land of Israel is a religious imperative more important than actually creating a morally attractive religious society for all Jews.

There is no question that Israelis, indeed all concerned Jews, have to continue to work out a Jewish public philosophy that truly justifies a Jewish state in the land of Israel. Hazon could have made a partial contribution to that necessary enterprise, but instead he wastes his time and ours in a sustained diatribe against a largely phantom enemy, and in the end has virtually nothing better to offer. As an offense to truth, this book can only further deter the just solution of the question of the Jewish state, a solution desperately needed by both the Jews and the world in which they are such important participants.

Beware of Counterfeit

NATURAL AND DIVINE LAW: RECLAIMING THE TRADITION FOR CHRISTIAN ETHICS.
By JEAN PORTER. *Eerdmans*. 399 pp. \$28.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Koterski

LIKE THE SPECIAL threads the U.S. Mint implants by which genuine dollar bills are distinguished from counterfeit, there is a mark that distinguishes a genuine theory of natural law from false ones: the insistence that there are some moral truths rooted in human nature that we all really do know and that we simply cannot fail to know. Out of self-interest, or perhaps from loss of nerve, we may choose to deny these truths, but interiorly we still know them and we will eventually have to deal with the pangs of conscience that their violation generates.

JOSEPH W. KOTERSKI, S.J., is Professor of Philosophy at Fordham University and editor of the *International Philosophical Quarterly*.

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Whatever else a given theorist of the natural law may emphasize, there can be no compromise on this central tenet. Unless there really is moral obligation, it will not be a form of natural law, and unless the immediate ground for that obligation is the metaphysical structure that makes a being human, the theory in question will not amount to natural law but an ethics of some other sort, whether divine command, Kantian deontology, utilitarianism, or something else. As Yves Simon and Heinrich Rommen long ago demonstrated, there is room for disagreement within the tradition of natural law about how one envisions the role played by God as the author of human nature, or about the tortuous problem of culpability when there is deeply rooted perversity of basic inclinations. But the objectivity of natural moral oblig-

ations is a nonnegotiable constant of the theory.

Only a sound currency, of course, is worth counterfeiting. Perhaps that is why there are so many efforts presently afoot to claim the natural law mantle. The "new natural law theory" associated with Germain Grisez and John Finnis is certainly the most redoubtable of the contenders now sparring with more traditional followers of Aquinas such as Ralph McInerny and Russell Hittinger. Some pretenders are easy to spot, as when Christian Traina's *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law* tries to justify homosexual marriage on the warrant that "natural law's concrete conclusions are dynamic and humanly generated to the same degree that humanity is." Where nominalism rules, we may readily call the unnatural perfectly natural if we want to. But, by the test

of the special thread, Jean Porter's sophisticated historical argument in *Natural and Divine Law* resembles the clever machinations of modern counterfeiters. The placement of surrogate threads is subtle, but careful examination shows the authenticating marker to be missing.

PORTER'S GOAL IS to remind contemporary moral theologians of the structure and variety of medieval natural law theories, and in many ways she does an admirable job. Porter helpfully and correctly warns against the modernist assumption that natural law, properly understood, must be grounded in pure (that is, nonreligious) reason. Instead, she shows that medieval natural law theories always paid serious attention to the roles of Scripture and nature as well as reason. And not just any secular idea of

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human nature will do. She emphasizes (à la *Redemptor Hominis*) that a proper understanding of the essence of human nature requires reference to the image of God in the person of Christ. This move raises the reader's expectations about the theological reconstruction of natural law she wants to undertake. So when she successfully criticizes Hume's idea of reason (that reason is merely an instrument in the service of passion and desire), the reader expects an argument about reason's proper role in discerning man's end, and thus the exceptionless moral norms that direct him to his fulfillment.

It has been a hallmark of genuine natural law theories that through rational reflection on human nature they arrive at the precise place where Scripture reports a firm commandment (against killing the innocent, for

example, or violating marriage vows). Building on this convergence between reason and revelation, such thinkers as Aquinas developed an elaborate virtue ethics to outline what further perfections are possible and desirable for human nature, especially under the aid of grace. But natural law, like much of civil law, has the humbler task of collaring the criminal and resisting what may under no circumstances be condoned, a task that must be done before elaborating the possibilities for greater perfection. As Augustine noted in his commentary on the Gospel of John, freedom from sin by the keeping of the commandments is only the *beginning* of freedom. Yet Porter does not go there; instead she tries to use the tools of natural law to build what is fundamentally a revisionist theory of social and sexual ethics.

The book dwells at length on the variety of medieval theorists who invoked "natural law"—philosophers and canon lawyers as well as moral theologians. Porter makes special use of twelfth-century thinkers who were fascinated with Aristotle's philosophy of nature, and of the modern scholars such as Charles Homer Haskins and Richard Southern who studied them. Porter lays out a compelling case for considerable variation in how medieval thinkers envisioned natural law and its applications. But her treatment of medieval uses of Scripture is innocent of what scholars such as Henri de Lubac (especially in *Medieval Exegesis*) and more recently Paul Quay have revealed about the pervasive insights for morality that the medievals' thoroughgoing attentiveness to typology made possible. Mesmerized by current trends, Porter turns patronizing when the Scholastics seem to her to get something like the subordination of women within marriage wrong, noting that they "did not have the kind of historical/critical perspective on Scripture that would have enabled them to relativize these precepts."

PORTER IS UNPERSUASIVE in her repeated claims that the figures under study tended to use the theological framework provided by Scripture, nature, and reason merely to legitimate the prevailing but often unquestioned views of their culture. In the area of sexuality, for instance (one of Porter's two major concerns in this volume), she finds that natural law analysis was largely "a continuation of attitudes . . . of antipathy toward sexual pleasure . . . deeply ingrained in Western culture."

The lack of the authenticating thread for genuine natural law—the nonnegotiable insistence that there are some universally valid precepts derivable by nature and unable not to be known (however much we are tempted to overlook them or pretend we do not know them)—is most clearly evident in the sections of each chapter where Porter sketches what contemporary moral theology can discover from her medieval labors. In the words of her own summary: "The Scholastic concept of the natural law, precisely because of its specifically theological character, does not yield the universally valid moral code that modern . . . natural law theorists have attempted to provide." What it does offer, she tells us, is "something that is perhaps of even greater value . . . a framework for . . . a more realistic recognition of the irreducible diversity of human moral beliefs and practices, together with resources for a more nuanced assessment of these diverse mores." The nuanced assessment she envisions would allow us to replace St. Paul's complaint that certain types of acts are simply contrary to nature with a more open-minded vision that might appreciate the goodness inherent in all sexual pleasure and self-expression. Nuances such as these, however, are her attempt to direct our attention away from counterfeiting phrases such as "irreversible diversity." Unity is the principle of intelligibility, and the lack of the special thread that marks



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Integral Naturalism

THE MIND OF THE UNIVERSE: UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE AND RELIGION. By MARIANO ARTIGAS. *Templeton Foundation Press.* 364 pp. \$22.95.

Reviewed by Ernan McMullin

FORTY YEARS AGO, publications in the boundary regions where religious belief and natural science both claim an interest amounted to no more than a trickle. Now, for one reason or another, they make up a steady and growing stream, most of them, it would seem, written from the perspective of the Christian believer. Even a casual glance at these newer writings will discover two quite opposing attitudes towards the natural sciences.

For some writers, the sciences represent first and foremost a challenge, even a threat, to religious belief. Their first concern is to find gaps in the explanatory competence of the sciences, inadequacies of theory that cannot, in principle, be bridged without invoking God's "special" action to supplement the natural causes to which scientific inquiry is necessarily limited. In this way, they hope directly to counter the provocative scientism of some of the most widely read representatives of the sciences, those who would claim that advances in science leave the Creator God of the Western tradition no more than an unnecessary "spare wheel," in Daniel Dennett's dismissive phrase.

In striking contrast are those who regard advances in natural science

primarily as a deepening of insight into the wonders of God's creation, as an opportunity, therefore, to understand better the intricacies of the natural order that allow the purposes of that creation to be realized. The first book in English by the distinguished Spanish Catholic philosopher of science Mariano Artigas leaves the reader in no doubt as to the side of this divide on which its author belongs:

When we contemplate the natural world from the point of view of its creation, it appears to be the deployment of a divine plan in which matter is endowed with a natural dynamism whose successive deployment and integrations produce an immense variety of systems and processes that make possible the appearance of the human being.

And again:

The new scientific worldview is most coherent with the view that divine action on the world carefully respects the agency of created causes and uses them to achieve the plans of divine providence.

ON THE TOPIC of evolution, which has so divided Christian opinion in the U.S., Artigas does not hesitate: "It seems indisputable that since life has actually emerged, the corresponding potentialities must have existed since the very beginning." He is not concerned to defend the sufficiency of the current version of neo-Darwinian theory; his own well-developed account of the nature of scientific theory would lead him to be wary of any suggestion that a particular theory constitutes the last word in its domain. His aim, rather, is to insist

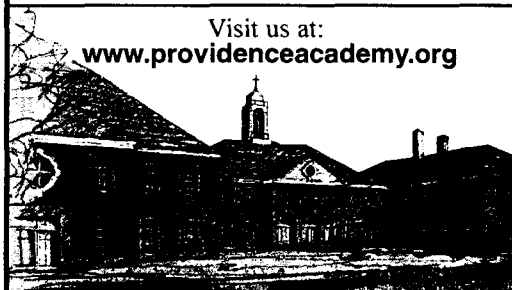


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that the potentialities present from the beginning in the created order are adequate to bring about the Creator's ends. The created order thus can organize itself and (prior to the advent of the human) there are no moments where the evolutionary process would be brought to a halt

without a call on the *non-natural*, on a supplementation of the resources of the natural order by a "special" action on the Creator's part.

Artigas' conviction that the natural order had at the beginning all the resources needed to achieve the ends for which it was created leads him to

call his approach "integral naturalism." This represents an appropriate, if daring, choice, daring because of the baggage that the generic term "naturalism" carries with it in the science/religion context. Its usage in that context most commonly indicates the rejection of the supernatural, the affirmation that the physical universe is, as Carl Sagan famously phrased it, all that was, all that is, all that ever will be. When Artigas uses "naturalism" without a qualifier, it is this sense that he has in mind, and it is against this position that his book is directed.

He also criticizes the view that the methodology of science is the only valid way to knowledge, a view he somewhat eccentrically calls "methodological naturalism." (Usually, in the science/religion context, this phrase designates a regulative principle that Artigas himself not only endorses but regards as "trivially" obvious: "You should not introduce divine action as an explanation in problems of physics or biology.") By calling his own brand of naturalism "integral," Artigas wishes to convey the notion that nature as understood by the natural sciences points beyond itself to a larger reality to which the natural owes its existence, a reality to which the methods of the natural sciences do not of themselves, however, give direct access.

ARTIGAS INSISTS THAT the discourse of the sciences is quite separate from that of religion. The existence of this gap, he argues, calls into question the currently fashionable model of the science/religion relationship as a *dialogue*. Neither side can bridge this gap solely through its own resources; only philosophy can provide the needed bridge. His book thus gives an importance to philosophy that is quite rare in books of this genre. And since the question interesting him is almost always the relevance of the natural sciences to theology rather than the other way round, his emphasis is

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specifically on the philosophy of science. His book is, indeed, an admirably wide-ranging discussion of contemporary philosophy of science, drawing extensively on English-language sources. Familiar authors Thomas Kuhn, Paul Feyerabend, Larry Laudan, and others troop through his pages. Somewhat surprisingly for so sturdy a realist, he gives Karl Popper pride of place.

It is not clear that so detailed a treatment of contemporary philosophy of science is needed to serve the broader theological theme announced in the title of the book. (Incidentally, this title, which Artigas describes as “deliberately provocative,” certainly succeeded in provoking at least one reader. The universe is assuredly the *object* of the human mind, but it does not *possess* a mind. Nor is it “rational,” strictly speaking, an adjective Artigas frequently attaches to it, as though it were a deliverance of natural science. It is *intelligible*, a very different matter.) Artigas endorses the claim that God is “the mind and reason of the universe.” This does not, I would argue, do justice to the *real* argument of his book, which is that certain of the properties of natural science, and of the natural world disclosed by science, testify to the operation of mind, specifically to the mind of God.

“Testifies to”: there is a troublesome ambiguity about the logic of this relationship, an ambiguity that pervades much of the recent literature on science and religion. Most often, Artigas is careful to use such guarded phrases as “is coherent with” when describing how a particular feature of the world relates to the belief that that world is the product of a divine Mind. This suggests a quite modest claim: it amounts, perhaps, to saying that this belief fits well into the worldview of someone who already believes in a Creator. The presence of such a feature thus draws attention to the coherence of the theistic worldview. “From the very beginning,” Arti-

gas writes, “I have remarked that I would propose interpretations based on *coherence* rather than proof.”

BUT ON OCCASION he uses much stronger language: the property he is describing “*requires* a divine foundation” (emphasis added); it “provides new strength for the arguments that point to a Creator”; it “clearly suggests the existence of a divine source of power and perfection.” Is this then to be a natural theology of the classical sort, which allows one to infer from a specific aspect of the natural world to the necessity of a transcendent cause for an aspect of that sort? I am pretty sure that this is not what the author intends, given his frequent reminders to the reader that the overall coherence of science and theology is all he claims. Nevertheless, he clearly wants to suggest that the universe of modern science more and more clearly displays the active workings of mind, a mind that can only be the mind of a Creator. He is walking a fine line here, as he obviously knows.

Something of the same ambiguity envelops the features of the natural order that he singles out for their theological significance. Chief among these are the capacity for self-organization, the teleological “directionality” that nature exhibits, and the emergence within nature of human beings who “transcend the natural level.” In all three cases, Artigas emphasizes the

mounting scientific evidence for these features of nature, and hence the relevance of scientific progress to his theological quest:

The existence of teleological dimensions of our world—not only at the biological level but at the physiochemical—is a plain fact. Until now the state of the sciences did not provide sufficient grounds for it; only the scientific progress of the last decades of the twentieth century has made it possible to reach this vantage point.

Teleology, as Artigas himself reminds us, however, is a notoriously slippery term. He chooses to give it the broadest possible sense: “Any kind of stabilized organization (of matter) implies the existence of teleological dimensions”; thus, “virtually any of the main aspects of our world can be taken as a particular case of teleology.” The operation of the four fundamental forces, for example, indicates the existence in nature of “tendencies” to build up “successive levels of organization” starting at the level of elementary particles. The “directionality” of such “tendencies towards goals” is “the hallmark of natural teleology.”

But “teleology” so broadly understood hardly needs the warrant of *recent* scientific advances to certify its

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existence. The solar system, for example, would qualify as possessing a "teleological dimension" under this rubric. Extending teleology to the nonliving world in this way tends, to my mind, to empty the notion of real significance. The living world is another matter. Natural selection is goal-directed in the short term. Evolutionary biologists (as Artigas notes) prefer to use the term "teleonomy" in this context because for them "teleology" carries the Platonic suggestion of recognizable direction on the part of an intelligence. It is risky to speak of "directionality" in this context; biologists in general resist the suggestion that evolution exhibits direction in any long-term sense.

Closely associated with teleology is the notion of self-organization, which for Artigas is "a key that unifies our entire representation of natural

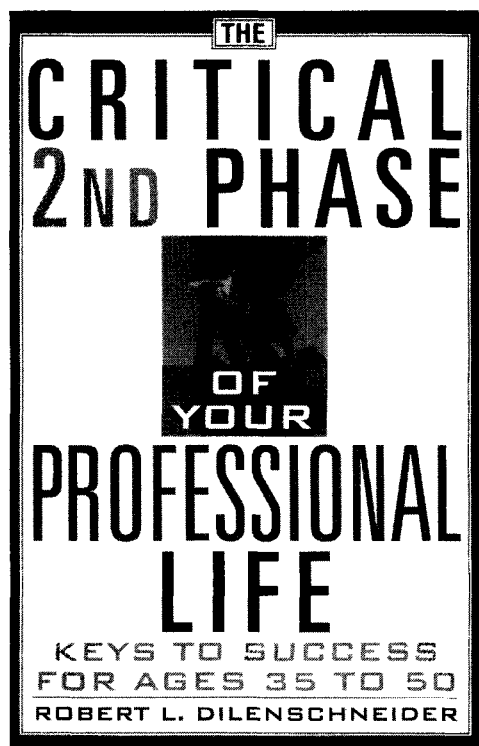
order." The two themes, indeed, tend to blend into one another: "Self-organization provides new evidence in favor of the existence of teleological dimensions in the natural world." Self-organization too is understood by him very broadly; it begins at the microphysical level and is exhibited most strikingly at the level of the living cell. The multiple operations in which the constituents of the cell engage involve "information," "directional tendencies," behavior that "insofar as it acts to achieve natural goods through sophisticated methods can be considered a manifestation of rationality." From this it is an easy step to: "The more the sciences progress, the more they provide us with knowledge of the process of self-organization that clearly suggests the existence of a divine source of power and perfection." *Clearly suggests?* Would not "is

coherent with" be more appropriate here? It is the overall *coherence* of the theist's worldview that should impress. It is tempting, of course, to go that one step further and make the wonders of natural self-organization an *independent* argument for God's existence. But from the philosopher's standpoint, it is, to my mind, a temptation calling for critical scrutiny.

According to Artigas, it is the emergence of rational beings possessing the sort of creativity attested to by the natural sciences that gives this process of self-organization value, and hence allows it to be described in theological terms. Human beings are in nature, but they somehow also "transcend" nature.

THIS IS WHERE Artigas' integral naturalism comes under severe strain. The spiritual dimensions of the human are

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not accessible, he claims, to the natural sciences. Only metaphysics or theology can discover them. Are they, then, outside nature? Artigas dismisses the emergentist solution to this dilemma favored by many naturalists, Christian and other. Yet the idea that the capacities of mind are naturally emergent from the potentialities implicit in the creation from the beginning need not be reductionist. The primacy of the spiritual can, many have argued, be retained in the emergentist perspective without incurring the unacceptable dualism of matter and spirit that seems implicit in so many attempts to wall off the human spirit from the domain of nature and the sciences of nature.

In a single brief paragraph, Artigas states the case for asserting "the special divine creation of every human soul." He has here, of course, the weight of authority and tradition on his side. But to his credit, he seems slightly uneasy about this break with the naturalism that elsewhere informs his book. He allows that this thesis forces a "discontinuity" into the otherwise continuous development of nature. A "specific divine action" is required in order to produce "a new level of being," one which the natural world cannot reach on its own resources. Allowing this "does not contradict the course of nature," he insists.

It may not contradict it, but it does seem to run contrary to the pattern of the Creator's action elsewhere in nature. Perhaps the gap between matter and spirit really *is* as wide as this, so wide that even a transcendent Creator cannot inform the natural world with the potentialities that would allow the eventual emergence of the human person without need for further miraculous supplementation on the Creator's part. But so peremptory a restriction should surely encourage the philosopher to raise questions. And Artigas' book suggests, to this reader at least, what some of those questions might be.

Is the natural world, through continuous processes of self-organization, indeed unable to produce beings possessing "the unique characteristics of the person"? Would man's uniqueness be compromised by allowing the qualities of the human person to be emergent? Have the natural sciences really nothing to offer in regard to those qualities? These are not easy questions to answer. One of the many merits of this estimable book is to draw attention to coherence as a worthy objective for Christians engaged in balancing the diverse sources of their worldview. These questions about the genesis and the relationship to the rest of nature of the human person mark where, for the present, coherence seems hardest to come by.

An Equal Division of Property

SOVEREIGN VIRTUE. By RONALD DWORKIN. *Harvard University Press.* 511 pp. \$35.

Reviewed by Robert T. Miller

RONALD DWORKIN, the Sommer Professor of Law and Philosophy at New York University and the Quain Professor of Jurisprudence at University College in London, is an internationally renowned legal theorist and one of the relatively few academics to achieve the coveted status of public intellectual. His political views are predictably leftist. He argued during the impeachment process, for example, that the House of Representatives' vote to impeach President Clinton would annihilate the separation of powers and that removing the President would be a "kind of coup."

ROBERT T. MILLER, a member of the *New York bar*, is a doctoral candidate in philosophy at *Columbia University*.

In his latest book, *Sovereign Virtue*, he arranges several previously published articles into a theory of equality, arguing that this is the paramount political virtue.

Dworkin assumes that equality means some form of economic equality, an assumption to which I shall return below. Economic equality he understands as equality of resources, and the heart of his argument spells out just what equality of resources means. On its own terms, the book may be judged successful on the coherence of this account. The argument proceeds in stages. First, we are asked to imagine that all members of society are given an equal amount of artificial currency with which to bid in an auction for all currently existing impersonal resources, by which Dworkin means to include all material resources (with a generally conventional bundle of legal property rights) but exclude any special political rights or the labor of other persons. This auction proceeds in multiple rounds until all participants pronounce themselves satisfied in the sense that none would prefer, on the whole, the lot of resources purchased in the auction by anyone else. The auction is critical to Dworkin's account because the measure of value used in determining whether a citizen has an equal share of resources is the opportunity costs to other citizens of his holding those

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resources, i.e., the amount other citizens would pay to have had them, and this can be determined only through market mechanisms.

Dworkin next observes that the equality of resources among citizens will not long endure because some citizens will subsequently earn more than others. In essence, Dworkin thinks that differences in income arising from differences in native talent, as opposed to those arising from differences in ambition or willingness to work hard, must be eliminated in the name of equality by redistributing wealth away from the talented rich to the untalented poor. (Dworkin later reveals that he thinks luck is the most significant cause of income differentials.) Of course, we cannot determine what portion of a person's income is due to his native talent and what portion to his ambition. Thus, to determine how much income to redistribute, Dworkin introduces

another critical thought experiment: hypothetical insurance markets.

We imagine that, at the end of the auction, all citizens are offered the opportunity to purchase an insurance policy that will pay them the difference between the amount they actually earn by working and a fixed level of income that they negotiate with the insurance company. The premiums for this insurance policy will be a percentage of the citizen's actual income, with citizens earning higher incomes paying larger percentages of their income in premiums (i.e., the premium structure is in effect a progressive income tax). Citizens will generally not insure more than a modest level of guaranteed income because the premiums for policies guaranteeing large incomes will be prohibitively expensive, both because the probability of the insurer having to pay on the policy is high (most people will not earn high incomes on their own) and

because the amount the insurer will have to pay is large (the difference between the high guaranteed income and the insured's low actual income). Hence, most citizens will contract for only a minimal income to ensure a decent standard of living. The average level of income that citizens would insure is the amount of income a just society in the real world will guarantee its citizens through redistributive taxation. Although Dworkin never gives a dollar figure for this average, he is sure it is substantially higher than the level of income guaranteed to persons in the United States through our current welfare programs.

DWORKIN REALIZES that what economists call adverse selection would be fatal to this hypothetical insurance market. That is, if, in deciding what income level to insure, citizens knew approximately how much they could expect to earn, then those who expect to earn little would purchase high levels of coverage, and those who expect to earn much would purchase low levels or none at all, and so the premiums paid to the insurers could not cover the benefits to be paid by them, and the insurance market would collapse. Hence, Dworkin stipulates that, in deciding what level of income to insure, citizens shall not know the value of their own talents in the subsequent labor market. His argument fails if this condition renders the whole thought experiment incoherent.

Dworkin is sensitive to this point. He is familiar with the criticism that John Rawls' notion of the original position in his *Theory of Justice*—in which citizens deliberate about rules of justice for their society "behind a veil of ignorance" that obscures all their own personal characteristics, including many of their own preferences and moral judgments—is incoherent, and so he is at pains to tell us that citizens will know what their talents and preferences are, even if they do not know their market value. He

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good or bad, but
thinking makes it so"**

—Shakespeare



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insists that under such circumstances the decisions citizens would make about how much income insurance to purchase can still be taken to be intelligent decisions of rational persons substantially like us.

But this is wrong, and for several reasons. First, anyone generally ignorant of the value people place on human talents could know nothing of social life: he would not know that facility in reasoning is crucial to success in many areas of human endeavor, that physical strength and speed have a wider scope of application than weakness, or even that most people enjoy sex. Imagining what the world would be like without knowing anything about what people generally value is impossible for us. Second, if Dworkin's citizens are to decide intelligently how much to spend on income insurance, they have to understand what else they might spend their money on, and hence they must know what other goods and services are available in their society and their relative prices. But then they know the market prices of the services people sell in their society, and so they know the market prices of the services they themselves might sell, and thus the market value of their own talents. So Dworkin's hypothetical insurance market is just incoherent. In fact, Dworkin's account lapses into naked self-contradiction when, later in the book, he insists that citizens can make authentic decisions only if they have "access to the widest available literature and other forms of art." How it is that these do not disclose the market value of various talents he does not say.

LIKE HIS MANY other writings in political and legal theory, the book suffers from Dworkin's method of philosophizing. Most analytic philosophers use linguistic techniques to analyze concepts from other intellectual domains and then display their interrelations. Dworkin, by contrast, begins from unchallenged, highly

abstract principles and then inquires which interpretation of these is best. Thus the fundamental Principle of Equal Importance states variously that "it is important . . . that human lives be successful rather than wasted, and this is equally important . . . for each human life," or that "govern-

ment must act to make the lives of citizens better, and must act with equal concern for the life of each member" of the community. (That these formulations, which are only two of several given in the text, are obviously not equivalent is a matter that Dworkin passes over in silence; perhaps the

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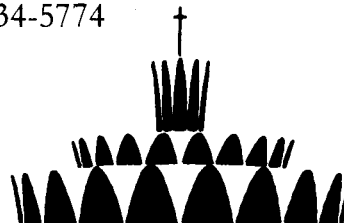
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inconsistency arises from the several chapters' having originated in previously published essays). This method creates two serious difficulties.

First, Dworkin's foundational principles make essential use of unexplained concepts like "importance" or "success," and these concepts are given definite content only when Dworkin argues that his proposed interpretation of them is better than the alternatives. This procedure conceals what is most relevant, i.e., the criteria or standards of rationality that Dworkin is using when he argues that one interpretation is "better than" another. These do all the philosophical work, and Dworkin is not forthcoming about them; they have to be guessed at by examining the arguments he makes in reliance on them. By obscuring key assumptions in this way, Dworkin often leaves the impression that his conclusions are simply the products of pure reason and that denying them involves some kind of fundamental incoherence. In fact, it involves only disagreeing with the unstated and often controversial standards and criteria Dworkin is holding in the background.

Second, Dworkin clearly states that he is assuming, not arguing for, his fundamental principles. He promises another book, based on his recent John Dewey Lectures at Columbia University, that will justify the principles themselves. For those formula-

tions of the Principle of Equal Importance to which almost anyone would give verbal assent, this might be unproblematic. But from the argument as a whole it seems that the formulation being presupposed is that government must ensure that all citizens under its dominion have some form of economic equality, the best interpretation of which turns out to be equality of resources, i.e., wealth (as opposed, say, to success in their plans or endeavors or subjective psychological satisfaction). If, like most Americans, the reader does not antecedently think that government has a duty to ensure each citizen some form of economic and not merely political equality, then this five-hundred-page tome is not designed to convince him. This greatly limits the value of the book.

ONE GETS THE impression, though, that Dworkin does not care too much about such theoretical issues. He is more interested, and his writing is much clearer, when he turns from the theory of equality to its practice in the second half of the book. The results are predictable, of course. Equality, properly understood, requires a national system of health insurance, which "might very well be something functionally very close to that proposed in Clinton's plan" of 1994, and our not having such a system is "our national disgrace." The 1996 Welfare Reform Act "was a plain defeat for social justice." Equality demands rigorous campaign finance reform; affirmative action is just; legal restrictions on abortion are unjust; and citizens should have a legal right to assisted suicide. But the arguments for these views, which, curiously, are often legal and constitutional arguments not related to the elaborate theory of equality developed in the first half of the book, are much more carefully thought out and are probably the best articulated among writers from Dworkin's point on the political spectrum.

There are other problems. Dworkin sometimes speaks respectfully about religion, but then he slips, contrasting religious believers with "more sophisticated people." More importantly, whole chapters are devoted to refuting contending interpretations of Dworkin's principles, and almost always the views being refuted are attributed to no philosopher in particular. When Dworkin gets wrong something as simple as the Catholic doctrine that persons are not required to undergo heroic medical treatment to prolong their lives (Dworkin thinks the teaching is that one must use all available means to prolong life, no matter how unreasonable), the reader is left wondering about how fair Dworkin is to the sophisticated views of his unnamed philosophical opponents. In a chapter on liberal equality and the good life, this fault erupts when Dworkin accuses again unnamed opponents of being "surprisingly deficient in any serious attention to issues of philosophical ethics" about the good life that he raises. This statement is either disingenuous or else betrays a complete unfamiliarity with the last twenty years of philosophical literature regarding virtue theory. The simplicity of Dworkin's subsequent analysis, as well as his failure to cite the works of a single virtue theorist, suggests the latter interpretation.

On the whole, the volume is useful for collecting the views on equality of one of political liberalism's most celebrated contemporary intellectuals. In method and level of argumentation, it surpasses the literature of law reviews but falls short of the standards of current analytic philosophy. In its principal aim of setting out a coherent interpretation of equality of resources, it fails rather conspicuously. In even assuming that it is the proper role of government to ensure economic and not just political equality among citizens, it will strike the many Americans who agree with James Madison in condemning "an

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equal division of property, or . . . any other improper or wicked project" as strangely and even anachronistically misguided.

BRIEFLY NOTED

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA. By ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE. Translated, edited, and with an introduction by Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop. *University of Chicago Press*. 722 pp. \$35 cloth.

Political philosophers (and husband and wife) Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop have given us a major work of scholarship: the first accurate translation of Alexis de Tocqueville's nineteenth-century masterpiece *Democracy in America*. In their rewarding introduction, the translators observe that *Democracy in America* "is at once the best book ever written on democracy and the best book ever written on America." That is exactly right, and this edition is a perfect opportunity to discover or rediscover why. Ranging from the Puritans and New England town meetings to political economy and American sex relations, Tocqueville's magnum opus is a kaleidoscope of history, social theory, and philosophy that remains as strikingly relevant today as when it was written. The liberal son of the dying ancien régime famously explores the dangers threatening liberty in democratic regimes: a consuming thirst for equality; a social atomism in which lonely individuals find themselves overpowered by external forces; the emergence of a "mild" despotism in which the Nanny State robs men and women of their dignity as if they were mewling infants; majorities flattening social distinctions; and a general lowering of human excellence. Tocqueville believed America was able to keep many of those dangers in check through a robust spirit of civic association and a vibrant religious life, a recipe still in order today. The trans-

lation is relentlessly literal and consistent, reproducing for the first time in English the unusual single-sentence paragraphs with which Tocqueville sprinkles his narrative. As Mansfield and Winthrop put it, "a book as great as Tocqueville's should inspire a certain reverence in the translator." The new edition also includes an extensive scholarly apparatus, providing the textual references to Montesquieu, Rousseau, and other thinkers that Tocqueville, typically French, left allusive.

— Brian C. Anderson

THE CASE FOR FAITH: A JOURNALIST INVESTIGATES THE TOUGHEST OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY. By LEE STROBEL. *Zondervan*. 304 pp. \$12.99.

"Faith," the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Yet many see faith as in conflict with reason and the intellect. Strobel, a former atheist who was once the legal editor of the *Chicago Tribune*, examines eight common objections to the claims of Christianity and subjects them to close scrutiny. These objections include reconciling the idea of a good God with the fact of evil and suffering; the belief that miracles conflict with science; the offense of claiming that Jesus is the only way to heaven and God; and the problem of violence in church history. In the process, Strobel interviews a number of Christian philosophers and theologians, including Peter Kreeft, Ravi Zacharias, and Texas A & M scientist Walter L. Bradley. The resulting product is an engaging apologetic that intelligently affirms the fundamental truths of the Christian faith in layman's language.

— Jeff McAlister

LYING AWAKE. By MARK SALZMAN. *Knopf*. 192 pp. \$21.

Sister John of the Cross is a Carmelite

nun who discovers that the religious ecstasies she has been experiencing after many years of spiritual dryness are probably the result not of God's grace but of a brain disorder. The disorder is easily repaired, but her challenge is a searing one: should she hold on to the consolations at the cost of her health and her life in community, or have the operation and lose her sense of God's presence? Such a dilemma might be expected to end up in all the usual clichés, but here it is explored with extraordinary subtlety, honest detail, and unpretentious wisdom. Besides being a well-regarded young novelist, Salzman is a cellist, a kung fu master, and—surprisingly—an agnostic. In this brief book one discerns an almost Bach-like sense of cadence and harmony, a martial artist's discipline, and an understanding of the realities of the life of faith that is as gentle and respectful as it is unsparing.

BODY, SOUL, AND LIFE EVERLASTING. By JOHN W. COOPER. *Eerdmans*. 241 pp. \$24.

Welcome back to a book, first published in 1989, that ought never to have gone out of print. Cooper, of Calvin Theological Seminary, offers a spirited, erudite, and convincing defense of the orthodox Christian understanding of the immortality of the soul. The new edition is enhanced by an extended preface in which the author responds to critics of the first edition, and evaluates more recent studies in theology, philosophy, and science. For most of the twentieth century, he notes, it was biblical scholarship, rather than philosophy or science, that did most to undermine Christian confidence that the soul exists in an intermediate state between death and resurrection. Cooper shows how biblical scholars reacted against the "dualism" of body and soul because of the liberal historical hostility to the

putative "Hellenization" of Christianity. The position for which Cooper argues he calls "holistic dualism," although he also accepts the term "dualistic holism." His intention is to elucidate and vindicate the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, the patristic and conciliar tradition, and the continuing belief of the faithful that the saved are, when they die, with God and awaiting the resurrection of the body. He very effectively demonstrates the falsity of pitting the immortality of the soul against the resurrection of the body, and, along the way, offers an informed discussion of pertinent scientific claims regarding the connections between brain, mind, consciousness, and soul. This is an important book written in a style readily accessible also to the nonspecialist. Warmly recommended.

THE DEFAMATION OF PIUS XII. By RALPH MCINERNEY. *St. Augustine's Press.* 210 pp. \$19.

McInerney offers a vigorous defense of Pius XII as a holy and courageous leader who was responsible, directly and indirectly, for saving 860,000 Jews from the Holocaust. That figure he takes from the landmark study of Pinchas Lapide, which is one of the many sources he mines in providing the reader with important documentation with which to counter the ongoing defamation of the wartime pope. This book, along with others such as Pierre Blet's *Pius XII and the Second World War* (Paulist), is part of a growing literature for the defense, even as the presses continue to churn out new and recycled briefs for the prosecution. Among the notable features of McInerney's book is a treat-

ment of the delicate subject of what Jewish leaders, particularly Zionists, did and did not do to help the victims of the Holocaust. He suggests that Jewish leadership is not in a moral position to criticize the much bolder and more effective actions of Pius XII and the Catholic Church. Contending that anti-Catholicism is the anti-Semitism of those leading the campaign of defamation, he concludes with a reflection on complicity in the current "culture of death" represented by abortion and euthanasia. This book does not pretend to be an even-handed account of the controversy surrounding Pius XII. According to McInerney, "the attacks on him are risibly easy to dismiss," and thus the question becomes, "Why is this good man being defamed?" The more strident critics of Pius XII will undoubtedly do their best to ignore this book.



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For the defense team, it provides useful information.

A LIFE OF JAMES BOSWELL. By PETER MARTIN. *Yale University Press*. 613 pp. \$35.

For a hundred years after his death in 1795, Boswell was viewed as a drunk, a rake, and a general buffoon who just happened, by a literary fluke, to have written perhaps the greatest biography in the English language, *The Life of Samuel Johnson*. Boswell's reputation was considerably rehabilitated in the twentieth century, in part because of the discovery and publication of vast hordes of his journals and other writings. Building on the work of others who advanced that rehabilitation, Peter Martin presents what is, all in all, a sympathetic portrait of Johnson's "Bozzy," who is still what the critics have always said, but is not only that. He was also a modest man, who put his extraordinary literary talent in the service of acutely depicting his world and celebrated figures who defined his world. But finally we want to know Boswell better because we want to know Johnson better, and on that score *A Life of James Boswell* does not disappoint.

CARDINAL RATZINGER: THE VATICAN'S ENFORCER OF THE FAITH. By JOHN L. ALLEN, JR. *Continuum*. 336 pp. \$24.95.

The author is the Rome reporter for the *National Catholic Reporter*, and, as the subtitle suggests, he does not stray from that paper's enthusiasm for dissent and hostility to an allegedly oppressive pontificate whose theological dirty work is done by Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Perhaps sensing that his narrative of ecclesiastical skullduggery is implausibly partisan, Mr. Allen appends several pages in which he generously acknowledges that Ratzinger is right about a few

important things. A well-researched, fair-minded, and theologically informed book on the remarkably complex person and work of Cardinal Ratzinger is still very much needed.

LAW AND RELIGION: A CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY. Edited by STEPHEN M. FELDMAN. *New York University Press*. 483 pp. \$24 paper.

Editor Feldman is adamantly opposed to the position advanced by, for instance, Father Richard John Neuhaus, but, to his credit, this big anthology is quite balanced and includes, among many others, Neuhaus. *Law and Religion* is a useful representation of wildly different and conflicting understandings of the religion clause of the First Amendment and, more generally, of religion in public life. It provides a wide-angle snapshot of the state of the debate at the end of the twentieth century. The state of the law and of the debate, however, seems now to be changing dramatically as the Supreme Court appears to be in the process of extricating itself from the mess it created, beginning in the 1940s, by trying to make impossible distinctions, such as that between the religious and the secular.

THE ABOLITION OF BRITAIN. By PETER HITCHENS. *Encounter*. 332 pp. \$22.95.

The conservative brother of the unseemly Christopher says that the jig is pretty much up with the U.K. Britain is engaged in a revolution—begun in the 1960s and wildly accelerated by Prime Minister Tony Blair—that is nothing less than the abolition of Britain. The union among England, Scotland, Wales, and Ulster is broken; membership in the House of Lords is now a position of political patronage; and the country is on the edge of abandoning sterling in subservience to the European Union's

euro. Then there are all the usual indicators of cultural and social decline shared with America, and maybe caught from America. Mr. Hitchens may be right, but the jeremiad does seem somewhat overheated.

LAW AND SOCIAL NORMS. By ERIC POSNER. *Harvard University Press*. 260 pp. \$39.95.

A University of Chicago law professor offers the familiar "economic view of society" based on rational choice and game theory, arguing that judges and lawmakers, recognizing that deliberative democracy is a myth, should be in the business of undermining social norms that get in the way of their preferred outcomes. The thesis is unimaginative, reductionistic, and representative of much that passes today for cutting-edge legal theory.

THE GRAND STRATEGY OF PHILIP II. By GEOFFREY PARKER. *Yale University Press*. 446 pp. \$45.

For the latter half of the sixteenth century, Philip II ruled over the first empire on which the sun never set. In the standard Anglo-American telling of the story, Philip is very much a villain; a defender of Catholic forces of darkness, oppressor of the native peoples of the New World, and master of the ill-fated Spanish Armada so valiantly turned back by Protestant England with the aid of a very Protestant Providence. Professor Parker of Ohio State University does not turn Philip into a hero, but does offer a sympathetic portrait of a limited but conscientious ruler trying to cope with the probably impossible task of trying to hold together an empire that was vastly overextended. The book is wise, readable, well-researched, and not devoid of lessons for contemporary globalizers.

THE RED HORSE. By EUGENIO CORTI. *Ignatius*. 1,015 pp. \$29.95.

A translation from the Italian of a sprawling novel recounting the experience of Italians in the resistance and on the Russian front during World War II. The plodding story is very conservative, very Catholic, and very anti-Communist, which is the best explanation of the rave endorsements by conservative thinkers on the dustjacket. The endorsements are, it seems, an instance of conservatively correct thinking triumphing over literary judgment.

ON THE LORD'S APPEARING: AN ESSAY ON PRAYER AND TRADITION. By JONATHAN ROBINSON. *Catholic University of America Press*. 236 pp. \$19.95 paper.

On the back cover, Richard John Neuhaus says: "God appeared in history and 'appears' in our hearts through prayer. The message is not that 'prayer works' but that those who work at prayer learn that God works through prayer, and that even our praying is his work. Such are the truths illumined by Father Robinson in a book that is thoroughly Catholic in doctrine and wise in the ways of the

Spirit." We checked, and Fr. Neuhaus says he means every word of that.

A GRIEF UNVEILED. By GREGORY FLOYD. *Paraclete*. 194 pp. \$13.95 paper.

Subtitled "one father's journey through the death of a child," this is an extraordinary account of how a family and a community of faith responded to the death of six-year-old John-Paul in a car accident. The book is at times emotionally devastating, at times spiritually exhilarating, and most of the time both at once.

Death of the Schooner *Muerte*

Confront the wind and lose
all motion. Do body and mind bemuse,
viewed as adversary
harbors? In jibbing's momentary
flight, atmosphere is muse.

Cardinal points in queues,
roulette-wheels, transfuse
pole to magnetic pole. In contrary:
bow and stern, fore and aft, lies the necessary
other. A shadow finds the body for its ruse.

Must fixed points confuse
all else as motion? *Muerte*, peruse
calligraphic wave: sanctuary,
melodic script: reliquary
where all waters, winds, diffuse.

Valerie Wohlfeld

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

THE TWO POLITICS OF ELECTION 2000

Late on the night of November 7, I announced to friends with whom I was watching the returns that I was going to retire as a political prognosticator. Not that I was ever a certified expert on political outcomes. Experts are certified chiefly by having been wrong more often than ordinary people. In fact, I had a pretty fair track record in predicting elections. But this time I paid the price of relying on inside information from the Bush camp. Right up to election day, Bush was supposed to win by at least a ten point margin in the popular vote and 330 or more in the electoral college. I have reason to believe that George W. Bush expected that as well. He and his people do not have the option of retiring as political prognosticators. I do.

More precisely, I am a recovering prognosticator. Which means I am subject to relapses, and I may fall off the wagon once or twice in the course of the following reflection. My purpose is to try to understand what happened, in the hope of getting a fix on our political culture and what might be done about it. As of this writing, things have quieted down. Only a few days after Bush had definitively prevailed, the bizarre Florida circus of counts and recounts, with its dimpled ballots and pregnant chads and legions of lawyers, seemed to be something that had happened months ago. Rumbblings and rantings about a "constitutional

crisis" fell silent. Suddenly, television was again serials, game shows, and the usual narcotics for mind and soul. America had returned, with stunning speed, to its strange normality. Or so it seemed.

While the election campaign that Mr. Gore appeared determined to keep going until the numbers came out right may have exhausted all but the most hard-core political junkies and made the rest of us grateful that there is not another presidential election for four years, we should not too quickly acquiesce in the urgings that we "put it behind us" and "move on." There are things worth learning from what happened on November 7 and from the prolonged campaign after the campaign. Three questions are of particular interest: What, if anything, does the election tell us about the state of the culture wars? How has the role of the courts in the post-election settlement changed the debate over the judicial usurpation of politics? And—risking my recovery with just one last snort of Old Prognosticator—what does all this portend for the future of the political culture?

To judge by the exit polls, and we have no better indicator at present, we are indeed two nations. At least two. Remember that much-discussed map in blue and red, with most of the country red (Bush) but with blue (Gore) dominating the populous coasts. In an amusing instance of what Marxists used to call reification, editorials and pundits talked about what The Map is "telling" us. For a time, The Map assumed oracular status. But of course The Map isn't talking. More than a hundred million voters each had something in mind, but discerning their intent is no easy matter (and not only when, as in Florida, they failed to indicate their intent on the ballot). But statistical numbers-crunching does indicate that people fitting this description or that voted this way or that. The indication is that we are, roughly speaking, two nations, and the divide is not economic but, for lack of a better term, cultural.

Both parties are—among many other things that they are—parties of the rich. It is said that Democrats this year outdid Republicans in big

donations of \$50,000, \$100,000 and more. Hollywood, Silicon Valley, and Silicon Alley are solidly Gore country, and Bill Clinton had successfully triangulated much of Wall Street into his camp. Of the ten richest U.S. senators, seven are Democrats. Gore carried eight of the ten richest states, but only one of the ten poorest. So the divide is not economic class, but something else. That something else is suggested by the one-quarter of voters who said that the most important thing is whether a candidate is honest. Eighty percent of them voted for Bush. Twelve percent said the most important thing is whether a candidate "cares." Eighty-three percent of them voted for Gore. There is a similar gap between people who basically want to be in charge of their lives and people who think they need somebody to fight their battles. Gore promised again and again, "I will fight for you!"

Economics has not disappeared as a factor. Bush beat Gore 54-43 with people who have incomes of \$100,000 or more. But he had a larger advantage, 56-41, among married people with children. Among people who go to church once a week, Bush won 57-40, and among the 14 percent who attend church more than once a week, Bush obliterated Gore 63-36. The over-educated and the under-educated vote Democratic. Voters with postgraduate education went for Gore 52-44, as he was also favored by women working full-time (58-39) and by people who do not have children in the home (50-46). People who say they never go to church backed Gore 61-32, as did 70 percent of those who support the unlimited abortion license and the same percentage of those who identify themselves as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. To modify a motto from the 1992 election, It's sex, stupid.

The personal is the political, the cultural revolutionaries of the 1960s declared. Before that, politics was mainly about great economic and military questions, issues of national security in the face of the Communist threat, and, for some years, racial desegregation and ending poverty. Now it is about the proper roles of men and women, same-sex unions and divorce and having children and a host of other questions once thought not to be political, and all of them somehow entangled with and ever returning to the conflict created by the *Roe v. Wade* discovery in the Constitution of an unlimited abortion license. About peace and prosperity there is slight dispute. Ask if the country is on the "right track," and a solid majority says yes. Ask whether it is on the right track morally, and 57 percent say no.

In politics, as in physics, an action creates a reaction, writes David Frum in the *National Post*. "As one part of American society has become more

secular, more permissive, more relativistic in its morality, another part has recoiled to become more religious and traditionalist. The Religious Right is just as new a phenomenon as the Secular Left that called it into existence. The religious conservatism of the 1980s and 1990s was the work of people—mostly parents of young children—who felt themselves to be under attack from a suddenly and inexplicably hostile society. They feared sex educators, Hollywood producers, gay-rights activists, and church-state separation fundamentalists fully as much as the latter would later fear them." In November 23 percent of voters said they would be "scared" if Gore won, 26 percent if Bush won.

Not Suddenly Last November

Frum's analysis rings true, but his conclusion is less than persuasive. "It's an outcome as troubling as it is unprecedented—and it suggests that the most important task facing the next President of the United States will be less political than cultural: the reconstitution of a functioning moral consensus in a suddenly polarized country." The circumstance is not so unprecedented. Jimmy Carter, to cite but one instance, ran on a moral-cultural platform in 1976 ("I will never lie to you." "A government as good as the American people."), and what would come to be called the religious right was largely triggered by the perception of conservative Christians that he had betrayed them, notably on abortion. Reagan championed traditional values in 1980 and 1984 and won solid majorities. So also—although it may be hard to remember the pre-Lewinsky era—Bill Clinton positioned himself as a cultural moderate (abortion would be "safe, legal, and rare") and was elected twice with a minority of the popular vote. The reality of two nations has not happened "suddenly." The divide between the politics of rights and wrongs, on the one hand, and the politics of rights and laws, on the other, has been with us for at least thirty years. Politics is mainly about culture, which is to say it is mainly about what people believe. A "functioning moral consensus" might be a very nice thing to have, but it is probably not an option in a "polarized country" where 49 percent of the voters say they are scared of the culturally defined other side.

But let's return to exit polls for a moment, this one by the *Los Angeles Times*. The most frequently mentioned concern was "moral/ethical values," with 35 percent of all voters putting that at the top of their list (55 percent of Bush voters, 17 percent of Gore voters). For 14 percent of all voters abortion was a priority; that was true for 17 percent of Bush voters and only 12 percent of Gore voters, indicating

once again that a pro-life position is an election plus. The Barna Research Group has a particular interest in the "born-again" vote, and its national survey indicates that born-againers went 57-42 for Bush, although, for some odd reason, Gore was rapidly gaining among those who decided late in the campaign. Asked why they chose one candidate over another, the dominant reasons behind born-again support for Bush were "character, political philosophy, and his position on abortion." Another oddity is that Bush did better (58-40) among voters attending mainline/oldline Protestant churches (e.g., American Baptist, Presbyterian Church USA, ELCA Lutheran, United Methodist) than among the born-again. The vote was almost evenly split among Protestants in non-mainline churches, which Barna says is a result skewed by the fact that more than 90 percent of blacks voted for Gore.

Nationally, a little over half the Catholic vote went for Gore. Catholics who go to Mass every week—30 to 45 percent, depending on whose figures you credit—voted overwhelmingly for Bush. That may suggest that the message, especially on abortion and parental choice in education, is getting through to Catholics within hearing range, but most are not within hearing range. Moreover, in some states with large Catholic populations (e.g., Pennsylvania, Michigan, Illinois) union leadership was more than usually effective in getting out the vote for Gore. Teachers unions opposing school choice were a major factor in sharpening the conflict between organized labor and Catholic leadership. This time the unions were also helped by ill-designed school voucher proposals in Michigan and California, both of which went down to crushing defeat.

As always in the reconfiguration of political cultures, there are many pieces in play. Historian Stanley Young of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst argues that the cultural and sectional factors are converging in a way that is reversing the historic roles of the two parties. In this election, he notes, the Democrats took every state north of the Mason-Dixon line except for Indiana and Ohio, while Republicans won every state south of that line, along with the Plains states. "The Republican Party of our day," he writes, "stresses 'traditional values,' 'free trade,' and 'state's rights'—all themes that one might have heard at any Democratic national convention from 1860 to 1924." Nixon's "Southern Strategy" and Reagan's triumph in 1980, he suggests, were not so much a matter of the Republicans capturing the South as of the South capturing the Republicans. It is an interesting thesis, although he pushes it too far when he writes that "In

the past twenty years, conservative thought as represented in conservative journals and think tanks has increasingly come to reflect southern traditions, experience, and cultural ideas. Conservatives have all but forgotten their Yankee roots." That is true of, for instance, the very small Rockford Institute in Illinois, but hardly the case with the Manhattan Institute or, in Washington, the American Enterprise Institute or Heritage Foundation.

Symbolic Hand Waving

More typical of conservative thought about the politics of culture is Francis Fukuyama of George Mason University. Conservatives have won the economic arguments, he says, and on the cultural front they have done a fine job of showing how the decline of the traditional, two-parent family is linked to a host of social ills. But in a society of divorce, broken families, and single parents, conservative proposals such as repealing the marriage tax are little more than "symbolic hand waving" and will have slight effect in the real world. "This leaves many conservatives hoping for a religious revival, or a cultural shift like the one that took place during the Victorian era," Fukuyama writes. Neither prospect, he says, can undo the fact of an information society in which work is more mental than physical and women often make more money than men, and neither can undo the reality of contraception and abortion which has broken the links between sex, babies, and the necessary male. This leaves conservatives moralistically complaining about "moral decline" in a society in which "the greatest moral passion turns out to be hostility to 'moralism' in areas related to sex and family life."

"This bodes poorly for conservatives," Fukuyama concludes, "who feel much more comfortable thumping the tub over taxes or defense than laying out a thoughtful position on single motherhood or gay marriage. They'd better start thinking fast, since the cultural issues are the only ones still capable of stimulating voter passion." Taxes and defense are the old "male" issues that no longer cut it in a time that political scientist James Kurth describes as "the feminization of politics." In response to Fukuyama's argument, one notes that religious awakenings are unpredictable in their source and their consequences. People are not determined by technological or economic changes. Morality is and always has been, at least in large part, a matter of resisting the easy way. People do it every day, and an awakening might mean that many more people do it much more often, until it becomes a way of life

reinforced by sanctions, formal and informal, against those who don't do it.

In addition, some changes, such as the abortion license, are not so set in concrete as Fukuyama suggests. Bush repeatedly asserted the goal of moving toward a society in which "every unborn child is protected in law and welcomed in life." That can be done step by step—by signing a ban against partial-birth abortion, and by, in the first days of his Administration, issuing executive orders that reverse Clinton's reversal of the minimal pro-life measures ordered by Reagan and sustained by the first President Bush. Yet Fukuyama is undoubtedly correct in recognizing that most conservatives, thinking *themselves to be hard-nosed realists, have not faced the reality that politics today is preeminently the politics of culture.* Deploping moral decline is necessary, lest we get used to the way things are, but it is not enough. The winning side will be the side that more convincingly articulates a more promising future that both accommodates legitimate interests and appeals to a sense of moral possibility. That, as I understand it, is the intuition behind Bush's "compassionate conservatism," a formulation unjustly derided by many conservatives.

Mr. Gore's campaign in the courts after the election provided some pleasant moments in this office. It was especially nice to have sundry pundits recalling what we have been saying about the judicial usurpation of politics and suggesting that this journal is owed apologies. Apologies, I should note, are accepted graciously and without even a hint of smug self-congratulation. Our 1996 symposium on judicial usurpation and subsequent articles were criticized for being alarmist; but the Florida Supreme Court changed many minds, and I now note that even worthies such as George Will are using the feared R-word, referring to the "regime" of lawless law-making by judges. And of course it was delicious to see liberals reverse course and condemn government by judges when, as they claimed, the U.S. Supreme Court gave Bush the presidency. The banner headline in the *New York Times* declared that Bush prevailed by a "single vote" on the Court. That is not true, of course. It takes five votes to make a majority, and it was in fact seven votes that rejected the scheme of the Florida court, thus ending Gore's ambition to selectively count until he got the count he wanted.

I confess to being disappointed, however, by the number of commentators who said they had at last been awakened to the tyranny of judicial usurpation but then expressed such deep gratitude that the U.S. Supremes had "saved us" from a constitutional crisis. Both left and right seemed to think that there would be something very wrong about resolving the

confusion legislatively—by the Florida legislature certifying its electors and, if necessary, by the House of Representatives choosing the President. The Constitution specifies the way of legislative resolution, but most pundits seemed terrified by the prospect. Thus we had, at the same time and often by the same people, a decrying of judicial usurpation and paeans of thanksgiving that the Supreme Court had spared us the awful prospect of self-government through the constitutional means of representative democracy. Having said that, I do think the decision of the Supreme Court was the right one. It was a sharp and dramatic rebuke of the Florida court's usurpation of legislative authority in attempting to change election laws after the election. A more effective challenge to the regime of judicial usurpation, however, awaits an occasion when a wayward court is set right not by another court but by those who are elected to represent the sovereign people.

There is much more to be said, and certainly much more will be said for years to come, about this strange election. As Mr. Dooley observed, it seems that God loves little children, drunks, and the United States of America. We muddled through, again. For the moment. Neither party is all one way or the other but, more now than before this election, each approximately represents the deepest differences that divide our society. The liberals who lost say that the closeness of the vote means that President Bush must govern from what they define as the center, meaning that he should govern as though they had won. I very much hope, and expect, that he will not accept that self-serving counsel. The alternative is not unbridled conservative partisanship. The alternative is the steady courage and imagination that might, over time, restore the difficult but necessary dialectic between the politics of rights and laws and the politics of rights and wrongs.

FT

WHEN BISHOPS SPEAK

"The USCC is the religious lobby of the Democratic Party," announced the monsignor over his postprandial cigar—the cigar being near certain evidence that this is a person to be taken seriously. The USCC, of course, is the United States Catholic Conference, which is the public action arm, so to speak, of the NCCB, the National Conference of

Catholic Bishops. (The relationship between the two entities is currently being reconfigured in a way that, it is said, will make Catholic advocacy more accountable to the bishops.) I have from time to time felt compelled to offer a word of caution about the bishops' overextending their competence—meaning both authority and knowledge—in pronouncing on public policy. But the pronouncement of the monsignor, who admittedly was in an expansive mood after an excellent dinner with an unusually good merlot, struck me as another instance of overextension.

The maxim that you have seen before in these pages is this: "When it is not necessary for the Church to speak, it is necessary for the Church not to speak." That's true for all churches and religious communities, but especially true for the Catholic Church. The bishops, after all, are not executives of majority-determined positions, but claim a certain charism of apostolic teaching authority. In this context, the Church speaking does not mean simply discussing or opining or raising concerns. It means the Church, through the collective voice of the bishops, speaking authoritatively, taking a position for this policy option and against the other. The bishops are saying that *x* policy is in accord with Catholic teaching and *y* policy is not, or at least that one is more in accord than the other. Faithful Catholics understand that when bishops speak, individually or collectively, Catholics should be disposed to obey, or, at the very least, to pay most respectful attention.

That's the theory. Episcopal authority, like all authority, can be recklessly used and easily squandered. That is part of what happened years ago when the NCCB issued a long pastoral letter on economic justice, and another on the morality of nuclear deterrence. Those were teaching moments and learning moments, also for the bishops. In more recent years, the NCCB has generally contained the penchant for issuing comprehensive pronouncements on great public policy questions where the Church's authoritative teaching is not univocally clear. After the economics pastoral, which pronounced on everything from marginal tax rates to just income distribution, a mischievous journalist called a large number of bishops and reported that most of them did not know what a marginal tax rate is. To put it gently, they did not know what they were talking about. Thus is authority squandered.

Addressing Public Scandal

A question frequently raised today about episcopal authority is of a somewhat different

nature. It is usually framed somewhat like this: What are the bishops doing about the public scandal created by the fact that some, probably most, of the more prominent Catholic politicians in the country are explicitly and actively opposed to the legal protection of unborn children? To take an obvious example, why isn't Senator Ted Kennedy publicly censured by the Church or declared excommunicate? That is a hardball question and should not be evaded. A while back the NCCB issued a splendid statement, *Living the Gospel of Life*, which was very specific about the responsibility of Catholic politicians and others in the public arena. But many politicians seem not to be listening. Over the years I have discussed this privately with bishops, always to find that the answers are, as it is inevitably said, complex.

Bishops speak of personal encounters with such public figures, in which they have argued, admonished, exhorted, reproached, threatened, encouraged, and begged. All to little or no avail. Perhaps a politician has a spiritual director who tells him that what he is doing is permissible, and that spiritual director is a member of a religious order over which the bishop has no direct jurisdiction. Is he to challenge the entire religious order, with all its national and international structures, and how could he effectively do that? For instance, during his years in Congress and since, Father Robert Drinan, S.J., has a consistent pro-choice record and has provided Catholic cover for other pro-choice politicians. Just as consistently, Fr. Drinan has been defended by the Jesuit authorities. Is a bishop to take on the entire Society of Jesus? Apart from the fact that most bishops, like most of us, are not the stuff of which martyrs are made, how might he go about such a challenge? These are among the questions that are asked.

As for excommunication, it is not so simple. A person excommunicates himself; the Church simply declares what he has done to himself. Committing a mortal sin and remaining in it is not so easy to do. First, it must involve what is called a grave matter. Complicity in the killing of unborn children is certainly that. About that the Church's teaching leaves no doubt at all. But then such sin must be committed with full knowledge and full consent. The human mind and will are not easily discerned. Full knowledge? Full consent? Here speaks a politician of my acquaintance: "I am a Catholic and I strive to be a faithful Catholic. I know what the Church teaches, and I honestly want to assent. But I do not understand where the Church gets the scientific knowledge to claim that the embryo or fetus is a human being, and, as a practical matter,

about which I know a great deal, I believe that laws prohibiting abortion would not only be ineffective in saving unborn children but would produce other and greater evils.” And so forth. The reader can readily imagine the other arguments advanced by this politician.

This politician is very deeply confused, to be sure, but is he with full knowledge and full consent complicit in the grave evil of abortion? He says that he wants to be persuaded of the Church’s teaching and prays that, if and when persuaded, he would have the courage to act on his conviction. But, he rightly says, the Church teaches that he must act according to his conscience. He knows she also teaches that the conscience must be rightly formed by the truth, and he says he is trying to form his conscience, also in light of the Church’s teaching. Meanwhile, he adds, he can do a great deal of good on many other fronts in his vocation as a politician, and his party would quickly end his career if he were not clearly perceived as pro-choice. Is he to be excommunicated? Has he excommunicated himself? Of course, this is what is called a hard case.

More common, it seems, are the Catholic politicians who explicitly, publicly, and repeatedly leave no doubt that they reject the Church’s teaching on the gospel of life. They regularly go to Mass and receive communion, and the bishop does nothing. Or so it appears. I am often asked by pro-life activists—brave and often heroic souls who have for years and at great personal cost borne faithful witness to the Church’s teaching—and frequently they ask with tears: “Why doesn’t the bishop do something?” I have responses, but I do not have an answer that satisfies.

There is another aspect of this. Quite apart from the state of a politician’s soul and the related question of excommunication, there is the matter of public scandal when prominent Catholics act contrary to the Church’s teaching. Public scandal is objective fact that cannot be fudged. It is not fudged, it is very directly addressed, in the aforementioned NCCB statement *Living the Gospel of Life*. As it has been addressed repeatedly by the bishops. Individual bishops in their dioceses have publicly and unmistakably made clear, sometimes naming names, that Catholics who support the unlimited abortion license, whatever their claims of conscience, are in objective violation of Church teaching. Admittedly, many bishops do not publicly address this public scandal. My impression is that most have. But frequently it is done in a muted and nervous tone, in part because bishops do not want to be viewed as “controversial,” and in part because they are intimidated by the USCC legal counsel, which is

embarrassingly timid about IRS regulations regarding anything that touches on electoral politics.

It is often asked why the bishops are so muted when in some other churches clergy openly endorse candidates and even invite them to campaign from their pulpits. There are, I believe, compelling pastoral reasons why bishops do not do that, and forbid priests to do it. Politics and religion inevitably do mix, but the overt religionizing of politics and politicizing of religion is good for neither politics nor religion. Yet the urgent problem of public scandal posed by pro-abortion politicians and other public figures remains. Bishops must find a way to address that problem candidly and effectively. It is inescapably part of their first responsibility, which is to be teachers. In the view of many thoughtful Catholics, the failure to address effectively the scandal of Catholic politicians who publicly reject the Church’s teaching on the gospel of life is gravely undermining the credibility of episcopal authority.

Lobbying Laundry List

Restoring such credibility requires speaking more clearly where episcopal competence is beyond dispute, and much more cautiously where it is in doubt. The reaction to the nuclear and economic pastoral letters, and the fiasco that resulted in the abandonment of a letter on women after years of squabbling, were learning and humbling moments for the bishops, and that is all to the good. Also encouraging is the current, however tentative, effort to make the staff of the USCC, which has at times been notoriously partisan in a leftward direction, more accountable to the bishops. For years people have complained, with considerable justice, about the laundry list of issues on which the USCC lobbies Congress, a list that has too often lent credibility to the complaint that it is, as the monsignor says, the religious lobby of the Democratic Party. It is not only Congress and the federal government. The list is represented as “the position of the bishops” to provide guidance for 148 dioceses and for Catholic policy advocates at every level of government across the country.

The USCC’s latest “Legislative Program for Congress” contains, as I count them, eighty-four bills or proposals on which a position is taken. That does sound like a laundry list, but keep in mind that twenty-two of those items are indisputably part of the pro-life agenda, dealing with abortion, physician-assisted suicide, the research use of embryos, and so forth. Six items under the general counsel’s office are connected with church-state relations, religious freedom, and tax exemption. And the education

department has eighteen positions, mainly in support of parental choice in education. So these three offices account for forty-six of the eighty-four positions, and none of them strains the credibility of episcopal competence. Not so for some items under communications (e.g., funding for public television), domestic and social development (social security and health care proposals), and international justice and peace (Kyoto climate control, funding the UN). One would search in vain for Catholic teaching that requires these policy positions; of the positions that are disputed along partisan lines, the USCC typically comes down on the Democratic side; and the competence of bishops to speak on these questions is, to say the least, not self-evident.

Ten of the eighty-four positions taken are in the category of migration and refugee issues before Congress. Here, too, questions could be raised, but the fact is that on immigration the U.S. bishops take pretty much the position of the *Wall Street Journal*, which, only half tongue in cheek, calls for a constitutional amendment abolishing national borders. The Catholic Church is the largest, and possibly the most effective, pro-immigration organization in the country. This has everything to do with strategic and pastoral planning, reflecting the fact that Latinos constitute at least a quarter of the more than sixty million Catholics in the U.S., and some expect they will be half the Catholic population by the middle of the century. Can moral arguments backed by Catholic social doctrine be mustered in support of limiting or even cutting back on immigration? Certainly. But my impression is that making them is like spitting in the wind. On this question, the bishops have a long-standing and settled conviction—not unrelated to the immigrant history of Catholicism in this country—that a generous immigration policy is good for poor people seeking opportunity, good for America, and good for the Catholic Church.

A Stark Polarization

So is the monsignor right in saying that the USCC is the religious lobby of the Democratic Party? In part, yes, and that is a problem. But it is less the case than it was ten years ago, and very much less the case than it was, say, seventy years ago. Fr. John A. Ryan in 1919 wrote the policy statement of the predecessor body of the USCC, the National Catholic Welfare Conference, called the *Bishops' Program of Social Reconstruction*, and his subsequent zeal for FDR earned him the title "Monsignor New Deal." Much has changed since then. Most Catholics

are now economically successful and socially secure. Among Catholics, as in the general population, organized labor is in decline, and its remaining political clout is almost exclusively in service to a Democratic Party relentlessly hostile to the Church's public priorities. (A wrinkle here is that unions could become newly important for the Church if they succeed in organizing large numbers of immigrant workers, but that hasn't happened yet and, for several reasons, may not happen.) Meanwhile, the Republican Party has in recent decades become the champion of the Church's public priorities—the protection of innocent human life, parental choice in education, the defense of marriage, church-state cooperation, and an array of issues under the rubric of religious freedom.

On the social and cultural issues that define the politics of our time, the party lines are disturbingly clear. Such stark polarization, dramatically evident in the recent election, understandably troubles many who cherish the American genius for political accommodation. The polarization has been created, of course, by those who for thirty years have been bent upon overthrowing the laws and tacit understandings that made for relative civil peace. That, too, is a complex story, but one result is that the Republican Party finds itself in the position of defending moral values espoused by the Catholic Church and other more tradition-oriented Christians and Jews, and the party has an obvious political interest in making the most of that position.

In contrast to our monsignor, some liberal Catholics complain that the NCCB/USCC is now becoming the religious lobby of the Republican Party. That is not the case, and should not be the case. At the same time, the bishops, like everyone else who has a part to play in the contest over law and public policy, cannot determine the partisan alignments of that contest. It is not for the bishops to decide whether to be more Democratic or more Republican. It is for the bishops to stoutly set forth the course of justice, and let politicians and parties decide whether they will support or oppose that course. Nor is it forgotten that in the public arena partisan alliances are usually a sometime thing, and those whose first task it is to speak the truth are not afraid to stand alone.

The bishops preserve and enhance their authority by exercising it judiciously, by more credibly grounding public advocacy in Catholic doctrine, and by more boldly acting like bishops should when Catholics of influence defy or distort that doctrine. With respect to lobbying, it is the case that less is more. Fewer positions more sharply focused and

undeniably within the competence of bishops is the way forward in the promising reconfiguration of the NCCB/USCC. By keeping in mind the maxim that when it is not necessary to speak it is necessary not to speak, the bishops will be the more credible when it is necessary to speak.

FT

UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER

Brent Staples writes editorials for the *New York Times* and books about race, making a big point of his being black. Stephen L. Carter teaches law at Yale, and does not make much of a point of his being black. The *Times* assigned to Staples Carter's new book, *God's Name in Vain: The Wrongs and Rights of Religion in Politics* (Basic). It is hard to know what qualifies Staples to review the book. He has no track record of writing on religion and society (unless he is the author of frequent editorials asserting that religion in public is a bad thing). To judge by the review, he knows little about religion in America, except that he knows he does not like evangelical Protestants and other "culture warriors" who try to "inflict minority religious values" on others.

Carter thinks religion is important in American life. Staples doesn't. He reflects a most parochial view of religion in New York City where, he says, "dead churches are gutted to make nightclubs, supermarkets, and, especially, condominiums, in which the vaulted ceilings above the sanctuary became a valued selling point." Presumably he is talking about Episcopal churches in New York, a few of which, with the dwindling number of Episcopalians who go to church, have been sold for such purposes. The packed Catholic (44 percent of the population of the city claims to be Catholic), black Baptist, Hispanic Pentecostal, and Korean churches are not mentioned. That would get in the way of his thesis that the "new ecumenicalism" of sundry spiritualities he sees in the Barnes & Noble bookstores has displaced serious religion. The "new ecumenicalism" is tolerance understood as the indifference that Mr. Staples favors, which explains his animosity toward those intolerable evangelicals.

Staples is also upset with Carter for writing that on some elite campuses "it is perfectly acceptable for professors to use their classrooms to attack religion, to mock it, [and] to refer to those to whom faith really matters as dupes." To which Staples responds:

"The claim that an elite university would tolerate open religious bigotry is implausible on its face. In an age of speech codes and rigidly enforced tolerance, a professor who trashed a student's religion would be brought up on charges and subjected to institutional ridicule." Mr. Staples obviously does not know much about universities either. True, a professor who trashed a particular student's religious belief *might* in some circumstances be censured, but Carter is surely right that it is commonplace for professors to dismiss religion as something outdated, obscurantist, irrational, and a general hindrance to clear thinking.

Not Our Kind

Perhaps the reason that Staples does not recognize the anti-religious bigotry in the elite culture is that he is so much part of it. Who knows, maybe he even wrote the recent *Times* editorial claiming that institutions teaching that homosexuality is morally questionable cannot be trusted with the guidance of children, or the related editorial asserting that the Boy Scouts are not part of the American mainstream because they do not allow gay scoutmasters. Mr. Staples is most particularly at war with those whom he calls "fundamentalists." He knows that most of them now sneakily call themselves evangelicals, but they are hardly distinguishable from the fundamentalists who have "always viewed [the larger world] as depraved and bound for hell." True, some of them are even educated, yet "evangelical colleges are just beginning to shake off this tradition, but cannot yet be deemed cosmopolitan." Of course, were they cosmopolitan in his meaning of the term, they would no longer be evangelical colleges.

Staples finds "distasteful and imprecise" Carter's suggestion that there are parallels between the early civil rights movement and today's evangelical efforts to bring religiously based values to bear in "the public square." The civil rights movement, he says, was trying to win "basic, secular justice," whereas conservative Christians try to push other people around. "The public backlash against the religious zealotry of that period was wholly justified." Note the use of the past tense. Staples concludes, "By undertaking a culture war, religious conservatives strengthened the public distaste for religious combat and enhanced the public appreciation for religious tolerance." In this view, the culture war is over, and the cosmopolitan position represented by, *inter alia*, the *Times* has triumphed. Those who do not accept the regime of the unlimited abortion

license, sexual liberation, divorce, and the wholesale assault on what are called traditional values should simply get lost.

Warfare in the Streets

Mr. Staples and his allies are, of course, the culture warriors, and have been on the offensive for decades. There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of one securely ensconced in a world of presumed moral superiority, a world comprised of people convinced of their right to rule and of their duty to ward off the barbarians who challenge that right. Stephen Carter's offense is magnified because he too, as a Yale law professor, is part of that world and is condemned as a traitor to his class. Carter believes that the naked public square is a dangerous place, that the convictions of the people, including those whose convictions are grounded in religious commitment, should be given freer play in our public life.

Staples sees it very differently: "Carter's contention that the state should cede more power to religion will strike many people as a recipe for warfare in the streets." The state belongs to the ruling class that has, in its own words, been conducting "a long march through the institutions" for thirty years. Brent Staples and his colleagues at the *Times* are the field marshals of the march and they have declared it to be unstoppable. More than that, they have declared victory. People such as Stephen Carter who suggest that there is something to be said for dissenters who are trying to get up a counter-march must be discredited as extremists who are inciting the peasantry to warfare in the streets. Stephen Carter thinks of himself as a moderate trying to negotiate a reasonable cultural accommodation. Staples and his band are having none of it. They will accept nothing short of unconditional surrender.

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WHEN TOLERANCE IS TRUMP

Duke University, a United Methodist school, has joined the long list of institutions accommodating—or, as some think, caving in to—the demands of the homosexual movement. In a joint statement, President Nannerl O. Keohane and Chapel Dean William H. Willimon announced that the blessing of

same-sex unions will be permitted in Duke Chapel. Dean L. Gregory Jones of the Duke Divinity School concurs in the decision. The reasoning offered in support of the decision is, at the same time, both wondrously muddled and brutally clear. In his statement, Dean Jones says the decision "takes thoughtful account of several key overlapping yet competing judgments." For instance, "Duke Chapel is a place of Christian worship." In which case Duke is deciding—as is pointed out by Professor Geoffrey Wainwright, the university's senior theologian in his protest against the decision—that Christianity countenances same-sex unions. This despite a unanimous Christian tradition to the contrary. (The small and dubiously orthodox United Church of Christ permits the blessing of such unions.)

Another "overlapping yet competing judgment," Jones notes, is that "formally, Duke Chapel is a university building, not a church." Why there should be a conflict between being both university and church in a church-related school is not explained. Wainwright notes that the founding aims of the university invoke "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and the Chapel "unmistakably bespeaks the purpose of Christian worship. . . . For many, myself included, such ceremonies [same-sex blessings] would desecrate a space they believe hallowed by decades of prayer and which they expected to be able to continue to use for Christian worship." The motto of the university, one notes, is *Eruditio et Religio*. Dean Jones says that "many gay and lesbian people and their friends are active and valued members of the Duke community and important participants in the life of Duke Chapel. Though the university's decision will no doubt be controversial, it is the result of an appropriate process that seeks to craft a policy faithful to these (and other) judgments. Hence, it is also a decision that can be respected even by those who themselves, or whose traditions, do not think same-sex unions ought to be blessed."

Prof. Stanley Hauerwas, also of Duke, has written much about the brutal tolerance of liberalism, of which this is a classic instance. (Oddly enough, Hauerwas has not challenged the decision.) An institution claiming to be Christian and affiliated with a Christian denomination is confronted by liberalism's charge that to act upon such a claim is discriminatory, and the institution folds. Tolerance is trumps. Of course, one might respond that Duke University has long since given up any serious claim to being Christian. I have mentioned before the conference our institute ran at which the former president of Emory University remarked, "I could maybe get away with saying that Emory is a United Methodist university, but, if I said it was a Christian

university, all hell would break loose.” The charter of Duke requires that two-thirds of the trustees be elected by the North Carolina conferences of the United Methodist Church. There is no doubt that the founders intended a Christian institution.

One might also respond that Duke Chapel, too, has long since given up any claim to being seriously Christian, in which case one might fairly ask whether the Rev. Willimon does not have a lot to answer for. The university says it has a “historic” and “symbolic” link with the Methodist Church. Historic in this context would seem to mean that it is a thing of the past, and symbols are, well, just symbols. Who decided that the church connection is a thing of the past, and when, and by what authority? And where were the Christians to challenge that decision? This would seem to be yet another instance of the willy-nilly de-Christianization of church-related higher education so incisively analyzed by James Burtchael in *The Dying of the Light*.

It is urged that for years the Chapel has offered hospitality to doubtfully Christian groups and activities. That is understandable. A Christian church or chapel might offer hospitality to many groups under the rubric of ecumenism or interreligious relations. Blessing same-sex unions is something else. It is a deliberate, self-conscious, and explicit contradiction of the teaching and practice of the United Methodist Church and of the entire Christian tradition. The Christianity that was understandably hospitable to diversity is now displaced by the religion of diversity. The case that should have been made is that Duke and its chapel are hospitable not despite the fact that they are Christian but precisely because they are Christian. They have no obligation to be hospitable, it makes no sense to be hospitable, to groups or activities aimed at defying or obliterating the very reason for their being hospitable in the first place. Now the rationale of Christian hospitality is displaced by coercive liberalism’s rules of nondiscrimination.

Both Hauerwas and Willimon, whom I cherish as friends, are noted proponents of a “radical” and “countercultural” Christianity. It is a strange radicalism that so supinely accommodates the culture of secular liberalism. The decision is, we are told, “the result of an appropriate process.” No doubt. It is the case, as Prof. Hauerwas has so often argued, that in contemporary liberalism the procedural overrides the substantive, and compromise in the name of tolerance displaces the deliberation of truth.

Keohane and Willimon write, “No one has suggested that we ask any clergy to perform these unions if that person, by reason of conscience,

conviction, or church tradition, does not wish to do so.” If it is a matter of conscience, conviction, or tradition grounded in truth, however, it is not a matter of what one wishes to do or not to do. It is a matter of obedience. The Duke decision is the product of what Hauerwas has so often described as the consumerist individualism of liberal capitalism. Among university divinity schools today, Duke is notable for its efforts to reappropriate the fullness of the Christian tradition, refusing to be dominated by the fashions du jour. It is therefore the more disappointing that in this case the divinity school went with the flow, failing to ask the hard questions about the founding commitment of the university. The argument for allowing the celebration of same-sex unions is pro-choice all the way. Nobody is compelling you to do anything against your conscience, only that you not get in the way of others doing what they want. Thus are communities of character—to cite a fine Hauerwasian phrase—turned into the “historic” and “symbolic” ties of a discarded past. It is very sad. Perhaps, at this late date, it could not have been helped. But the controversy might have been the occasion for a bold and articulate witness to the idea of a Christian university. Witness does not have to be successful. It is its own success, and its absence is evidence of a grievous failure.

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WHILE WE’RE AT IT

■ If anybody still doubts the triumph of market economics, there is this big story in the *Wall Street Journal*, no less, “Protestants Look to Their Roots.” The gist of the report is that the liberal oldline denominations are going into niche marketing in a big way. The denominations (the *Journal* calls them “sects”) under discussion are the United Methodists (8.5 million, down from 9.5 million in 1980), Presbyterian Church USA (2.5 million, down from 3.2 million in 1980), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (flat at about 5.15 million since creation by merger in 1987), and the Episcopal Church (2.3 million, down from 3 million in 1980). The ELCA has launched Project Identity, a \$5.2 million public relations campaign, including TV and radio ads. “Project Identity was started after a 1996 poll revealed that only 3 percent of Americans could say anything about Lutheranism other than it was a

religion. Lutheran leaders ruefully recall a Pennsylvania newspaper that published a photo of Martin Luther King, Jr., instead of Martin Luther, alongside an ad for Lutheran services." The Lutheran and other initiatives, says the *Journal*, are aimed at establishing "brand identity." Presbyterians are restoring catechism courses that mention John Calvin, and Episcopal educational materials explain why there is a House of Bishops that makes decisions for the communion. The Lutheran situation is a bit paradoxical, opines the *Journal*, since they have also entered into full communion with other bodies—Episcopal, Moravian, United Church of Christ, etc.—an arrangement that "allows, among other things, pastor swapping." Rather than furthering homogenization, "this means we've got to have our identity even more together," said Pastor Eric C. Shafer, an ELCA spokesman. When everybody's in bed together, there is a need for clearer labels indicating who is what. Now that it has been decided that in doctrine, worship, and polity there are no differences that really make a difference, marketing (formerly known as evangelization) must be pitched to brand loyalty and identity, highlighting marginal distinctives of vestigial traditions. The *Journal* notes that conflicts over questions such as homosexuality, abortion, and women's ordination give further impetus to accenting affiliational choice, since there is little expectation that Christians will ever resolve such disagreements. Market managers (formerly known as missionaries) take their mandate from Our Lord's Great Commission, "Go into all the world, selling them all that used to divide you." Now that identity has replaced truth, that can be done safely, without risk of serious religious conflict. The new turn described by the *Journal* is, of course, a return to an older view that the religion business flourishes in America because of denominational competition. It is a subspecies of the "factionalism" praised by Madison in the *Federalist*. The twentieth century's concern for ecumenism may be remembered as a time when oldline Protestantism briefly flirted with the idea that professed belief in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church requires a unity that transcends institutional self-preservation by the capitalistic marketing of differences.

■ Indulge me, please. You know how much I loved my late bishop, John Cardinal O'Connor. But I think you will find this of interest as well. At the Al Smith dinner last October, both Al Gore and George W. Bush spoke. The papers reported that Bush was resoundingly applauded, but gave almost nothing of what he actually said. Here is part of what he said,

and said very well: "Before I close, there is another man I'd like to talk about—someone who is not here, John Cardinal O'Connor. I will never forget his funeral. Inside that beautiful cathedral were two Presidents and other leaders of our country; outside, were average New Yorkers who stood ten-deep along Fifth Avenue. The Cardinal was one of the most impressive men I have ever met. He was a moral leader, and not just for Catholics. . . . Everyone who met him saw strength and energy, wit and intellect. He was a man who held a great position—and added to its authority. He took a high office—and lifted it. For anyone who aspires to leadership, he is a model. The story is told that when Pope John Paul II went looking for a successor to the great Cardinal [Terence] Cooke, he said, 'I want a man like me in New York.' The quote may or may not be true—but it turned out that way. Cardinal O'Connor was known for both his conviction and his kindness—he took people on their own terms. There were no barriers to his friendship. . . . Cardinal O'Connor defied all the labels, and showed us that the truth is sometimes larger than the left or the right. He was a naval officer, who spoke for peace. He defended the doctrines of his Church, and reached out to other faiths. He knew the wealthy and the powerful, and taught that poverty in a wealthy nation is a scandal. He spoke for the rights of workers, the rights of immigrants, and the rights of the unborn. The Cardinal had a way of putting politicians on the spot—exactly where we belong. He was never a man to mince words. He followed truth where it led, and spoke for the dictates of morality. He understood that morality is what gives authority to power, and purpose to freedom, and dignity and direction to all our lives. He had a motto: 'There is no love without justice.' And he lived it every day. And he proved that justice without love is incomplete. He proved that in AIDS wards and in homes for unwed mothers, and in countless acts of caring and comfort. Where the world wanted compromise, there was steel. Where the world expected harsh judgment, there was simple love. His Holiness clearly knows how to pick good men, and he has found another in Archbishop Edward Michael Egan. New York has welcomed you warmly. And it has been a pleasure to be with you all tonight. Your Excellency, Laura and I would like you to come and visit with our family next year. I'll send you the address—as soon as I know what it is. Thank you very much. God bless."

■ Who killed the "peace process" in the Middle East? Put differently, who is responsible for forcing "peace process" into quotes? Of course, there is

always enough blame to go around, but we should not let evenhandedness get out of hand. As Yasir Arafat and other Arab leaders make unmistakably clear, they do not want this or that from the State of Israel; they want the State of Israel not to be. Israel has done many things wrong, and many wrong things. A militarized society and occupying force is not pretty. But what, at the end of the day, is the alternative? Perhaps to declare the whole thing a mistake, dismantle the State of Israel, along with the economy and everything else Israelis have built since 1948, and then resettle five million Jews somewhere else in the world. For numerous reasons, this should be unthinkable, but it obviously is not unthinkable to many Arabs and their sympathizers. One has to wonder what, in the short and long term, the critics of Israel in this country have in mind for the future of Israel, if any. "The fundamental source of the present violent confrontation lies in the continued failure to make real the national rights of the Palestinian people to a sovereign independent state in their own homeland," says Robert Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches. Similar statements laying the burden of the blame on Israel have been issued by the Episcopal, United

Methodist, ELCA Lutheran, and Presbyterian (USA) churches. Mark Tooley of the Institute on Religion and Democracy writes: "None of the statements touched upon the possibility that Palestinian violence was orchestrated to pressure Israel for more territorial compromises. Nor did any criticize Yasir Arafat for inciting the violence by broadcasting cries for vengeance and blood on Palestinian television. None cited the continued refusal of publications and media of the Palestinian Authority to admit to Israel's right to exist. And none expressed any concern about human rights abuses and corruption under Arafat's dictatorship over the 90 percent of Palestinians who now live under his authority. It should also be noted that mainline church officials, despite their professed concern for international peace and justice, have limited their protests about human rights abuses in the Middle East to Israel. One can look in vain through church archives over the last thirty years for any substantive criticism of Arab governments, even though they include some of the worst persecutors of Christians, a topic that presumably would interest U.S. churches." Tooley notes that evangelical groups, such as the Southern Baptists, along with the Catholic bishops, while recognizing the plight of the Palestinians, have been much more appreciative of Israel's dilemma in seeking a peace that is not the peace of the dead. How does one explain the bias of the oldline liberal churches? Tooley suggests this: "In part it is theological. Unlike some conservative evangelicals, mainline church officials do not take literally the Old Testament promises of a land for Israel. But mostly it is political. Israel is a Western-style democracy supported by the United States. The Palestinians and other Arabs are perceived as oppressed Third World peoples still struggling against Western imperialism. Had Israel aligned itself with the Soviet Union fifty years ago rather than the U.S., the mainline churches attitude today might be different. Mainline church officials reserve their sympathies entirely for the Palestinians as a designated 'victim' group, regardless of the character of that group's self-appointed leaders, and regardless of the tactics employed to advance its cause." That may not be an entirely satisfactory explanation, but it is a big part of what such an explanation would look like.

■ The communication of fast-breaking news is greatly facilitated by the Internet. Here is an e-mailed press release from Father Thomas Reese, S.J., editor of *America* magazine. The item is so hot that the release carries an embargo date. *America* has discovered a 1953 letter indicating that the Holy

For your personal reading or study group during Lent and Holy Week, Basic Books has just brought out in paperback Father Richard John Neuhaus' acclaimed *Death on a Friday Afternoon: Meditations on the Last Words of Jesus from the Cross*. Available wherever books are sold.

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— Charles Colson
Prison Fellowship Ministries

"*Death on a Friday Afternoon* will touch that hidden place in each of us which yearns for God despite, or because of, all our imperfections. This is a marvelous book, not merely for Eastertide, but for every day of the year."

— The Most Rev. Charles Chaput
Archbishop of Denver

Office in Rome thought that, while Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* intended "to bring out the victory of the power and the glory of the Lord in spite of man's wretchedness," Greene's depiction of the whiskey priest might disconcert "unenlightened persons." The office asked the Archbishop of Westminster to encourage Greene to attend to this concern in subsequent editions of the book. Greene declined to make any changes, and that was that. At least that was that until the fast-breaking news that in 1953 someone in the Holy Office was guilty of misjudging a very good book!!! Remember, *America* reported it first.

■ Robert Ross was one of the beautiful young men in Oscar Wilde's entourage of desperately decadent aestheticism. Many years later, after Wilde's public humiliation, imprisonment, exile, sickness, and decline into beggary, Ross still stood by him. A few years before Wilde's death in Paris in 1900, he talked, as he had many times before, about his desire—or perhaps he viewed it more as his destiny—to be received into the Catholic Church. Ross wrote to a friend: "When Oscar came out of prison he had the idea of becoming a Catholic, and he consulted me about it, for you know I am a Catholic. I did not believe in his sincerity and told him if he really meant it, to go to a priest, and I discouraged him from anything hasty in the matter. As a fact, he had forgotten all about it in a week, only from time to time he used to chaff me as one standing in the way of his salvation. I would willingly have helped him if I thought him in earnest, but I did not fancy religion being made ridiculous by him. I used to say that if it came to his dying I would bring a priest to him, not before." Ross understood that about some things the importance of being earnest is ultimately important. As it happened, on the day before Wilde died Ross did bring a priest; Wilde was baptized and received the sacraments of penance and anointing. The story is affectingly told by Joseph Pearce in his new biography, *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde*, published in the U.K. by HarperCollins and soon, one hopes, to appear here. Ross was well advised to be cautious with a prodigiously talented man who built a once towering reputation on witty posturings about the mask as truth and the truth as mask. Today Wilde's reputation towers again in the homosexual subculture where he is "Saint Oscar," a revered icon of campish decadence. It is, of course, a radically inverted sainthood. In 1890, before the catastrophes struck, Wilde pronounced: "The courts of the city of God are not open to us now. Its gates are guarded by Ignorance, and to pass them we have to surrender

all that in our nature is most divine. It is enough that our fathers believed. They have exhausted the faith-faculty of the species. Their legacy to us is the skepticism of which they were afraid. . . . We cannot go back to the saint. There is far more to be learned from the sinner." It is the merit of Pearce's biography to highlight the ways in which such nihilistic bravado masked the irrepressible awareness of being pursued by Francis Thompson's "hound of heaven." For Wilde at the end, and for many others of his circle far earlier in their lives, came faith's response to the words of the Lord, "Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest, / I am He Whom thou seekest." One after another, some rushing and others reluctantly submitting as though to a destiny that would be no longer denied, many of Wilde's friends entered into full communion with the Catholic Church. At last, or so it seems, their tutor in the rancid pleasures of decay, fearful lest he miss the eternal convivium of friendship purged of evil, begged entry to the company of the forgiven. *The Unmasking of Oscar Wilde* will undoubtedly be attacked by the hierophants of the current cult of "Saint Oscar," but others, I expect, will see in Joseph Pearce's telling of the story a way toward liberation from a subculture's desperate affectation of freedom from moral truth.

■ "The New Evangelization of American Intellectual Culture" is an insightful and wide-ranging essay by Father Arthur Madigan, S.J., of Boston College. (Delivered in August 2000 at a Jesuit conference on the thought of John Paul II at Xavier University, Cincinnati, it will soon be published in the conference proceedings.) The phrase "new evangelization" was coined by Paul VI and has been invoked repeatedly by John Paul II. Addressing the formidable challenges posed by American intellectual culture, Fr. Madigan also specifies unexplored opportunities for evangelization in the professions, the arts, and higher education. Then there is the question of public intellectuals. "So far as I can see, the Catholic episcopate has not had a public intellectual since Fulton Sheen, and the Society of Jesus has not had one since John Courtney Murray; the closest I can think of are Walter Ong, Robert Drinan, David Hollenbach, and Thomas Reese." Some will cavil at the suggestion that Bishop Sheen was a public intellectual, but Madigan is right. Sheen was also very much a popularizer, which means that he effectively simplified things (and on television yet!), which means, in turn, that he was held in contempt by Catholics thirsting for intellectual respectability. But by public intellectual Madigan has in mind "men

and women whose names and ideas are known not just in a particular discipline but in American intellectual culture generally,” and Sheen was such a man. I think it possible that in the next few years Francis Cardinal George of Chicago, and maybe another bishop or two, might be recognized as public intellectuals. As for Jesuits, Fr. Walter Ong, whom I greatly admire, was that in his heyday, and I would certainly put Fr. Avery Dulles before the others mentioned by Madigan. He continues: “Asked to name the current American Catholic public intellectuals, I would reply with names like Mary Ann Glendon, Alasdair MacIntyre, Richard John Neuhaus, John Noonan, Michael Novak, Andrew Sullivan, Charles Taylor, George Weigel, Garry Wills, and perhaps Lisa Sowle Cahill, Andrew Greeley, Monika Hellwig, Richard McBrien, and David O’Brien.” The making of lists is always interesting, and that is an interesting list. But then Fr. Madigan writes that “the influential media tend to select as public intellectuals those Catholics who are perceived, rightly or wrongly, as sharing the presuppositions of the dominant intellectual culture or of important groups within it.” Consider the first group on his list; only Catholic-bashing Garry Wills and, on select questions, Andrew Sullivan would seem to share the presuppositions of the dominant intellectual culture. The others are known for their vigorous, even staunch, articulation of Catholic teaching. Well, my friend John Noonan is somewhat less than vigorous on aspects of sexual ethics. As for Madigan’s “maybe” list, it does not seem that Cahill and Hellwig are that well known, and Fr. McBrien is mainly trotted out from time to time to present an alternative view to whomever is taking the Catholic position. Fr. Greeley, for all his irascible eccentricities, and maybe because of them, certainly belongs in the first group. There are other people who belong there, but I will not mention them because I might forget one or two, and I need all the friends I have. Fr. Madigan is right that the media in the intellectual culture play a part in selecting public intellectuals, but the ones he mentions are chiefly selected because they represent an alternative to the dominant view in that culture. In other words, because they are Catholic. It would seem to follow that “the new evangelization of American intellectual culture” continues to be in large, if not largest, part a countercultural task.

■ Don’t discount the “Yuck Factor” when thinking about the strange things that science proposes to do, and is doing, especially when it comes to messing with human nature. That is the admonition of Mary Midgely in “Biotechnology and Monstrosity,”

published in the *Hastings Center Report*. Would-be pioneers of the brave new world routinely dismiss moral objections, and religiously grounded moral objections in particular, as merely “emotional” while veiling their own utilitarian calculations in the high dignity of Reason and Science. In fact, as Midgely convincingly argues, utilitarian calculations of probable consequences are a good deal shakier and shiftier than moral judgments secured in reasoned traditions. Surveying some of the rocky history of religion and science debates, Midgely notes that developments in relativity, quantum theory, and the like should have drastically changed the way we think about such questions. “At this point a new world picture ought to have emerged, a picture drawn, this time, not from technology but from science itself. The public found these new physical theories so obscure that nobody managed to express them in a convenient image. The idea of ‘relativity’ only generated a social myth, a vague cultural relativism about human affairs. Not till after the Second World War did three new and much more colorful images emerge in rapid succession. They all reached the general public, and they were all reflections of new technologies. They are the ones that occupy us today. First, at the physical level, the idea of the atom was dramatized by bombs and by the promise of atomic power, so that the world seemed to consist essentially of atoms. Second, in human social life, computers emerged, and it was promptly explained that everything was really information. And third, on the biological scene, genetic determinism appeared, declaring that (among living things at least) everything was really genes and we were only the vehicles of our genes, but that (rather surprisingly) we nevertheless had the power to control them. It has proved quite hard to relate these three different world pictures, all of them reductive, but requiring different reductions. In theory, of course, they should not conflict. As far as they are scientific, they should, properly speaking, all find their modest places within the wider field of science. But world pictures like this are not primarily science. The science that is supposed to justify them is quite a small part of their content. They are actually metaphysical sketches, ambitious maps of how all reality is supposed to work, guiding visions, systems of direction for the rest of our ideas. And because these visions draw their strength from particular technologies in the outside world, belief in them fluctuates with the success of their parent technology and particularly with its disasters.” The point is that the Yuck Factor may be an intelligently informed intuition that anticipates the disastrous consequences in what we human beings can do to

ourselves. Midgely's is an altogether humane argument. Against the Yuck Factor playing much of a role in defending the *humanum*, however, is Raskolnikov's despairing cry, "Man gets used to anything—the beast!" We must hope that Raskolnikov will turn out to be wrong about that.

■ Professor Susan Greenfield of Oxford University says, "Consciousness grows as the brain grows. As soon as something has a nervous system, however primitive, we have to tread more cautiously." The "something" in question is an unborn baby. Her statement was in connection with a British newspaper survey that found that 80 percent of neuroscientists who responded say that babies aborted after eleven weeks of gestation should receive pain relief during the procedure. The kindness that kills.

■ What Jeffrey Rosen writes about the courts is almost always worth reading. No exception is a recent article in the *New York Times Magazine* on the kind of Justices a new president is likely to nominate to the Supreme Court. But then Mr. Rosen writes this: "For more than fifty years, liberals and conservatives agreed that the tyranny of elected representatives was less dangerous than the tyranny of unelected Justices of the Supreme Court." Come again? It is an old ploy, when the other side is winning an argument, to pretend that there was never any disagreement to begin with. The most egregious instance in recent history is the now near-unanimous claim of liberals that of course they agreed all along that the Soviet Union was an evil and unsustainable empire, which is precisely what most of them spent forty years denying. Now Mr. Rosen tells us that liberals have agreed all along on the threat of judicial tyranny. The fact, risibly easy to document, is quite the opposite. For the last fifty years the consistent liberal line has been that the great threat is the tyranny of the majority and the elected politicians who pander to the majority. The great protection against that threat is the Constitution and the bold liberal Justices who decide what the Constitution means. That is the line found in almost every textbook from grade school through graduate school; it is the relentless line of the establishment media on questions ranging from affirmative action to abortion to gay rights. It is an encouragement that some liberals are coming around to recognize the tyranny of unelected Justices, aptly described as the judicial usurpation of politics. Their change of mind—greatly aided by the recent presidential election—is most welcome, and they should not embarrass themselves by denying it.

The sobering reality, however, is that the great majority of liberals persist in pitting the Constitution and the judiciary against the representative democracy that they fear.

■ Published in the U.K. but not yet here is *J. R. R. Tolkien: Author of the Century* by T. A. Shippey, formerly of Oxford and now of St. Louis University. The book is a running and, for the most part, persuasive polemic against a literary establishment that is disdainful of *The Lord of the Rings* and other Tolkien achievements. It is not simply, says Shippey, that Tolkien's fantasies have sold more than a hundred million copies; he, almost single-handedly, established fantasy as the literary mode of a century. Shippey cites an editor at a major publishing house who said, "Only fantasy is mass-market. Everything else is cult-fiction." (Reflective pause.) "That includes mainstream." In support of his case, Shippey cites George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and *Animal Farm*, William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* and *Cat's Cradle*, Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed*, and Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49* and *Gravity's Rainbow*. He mentions in passing the several fantasies by C. S. Lewis (to whom, for some unexplained reason, he seems rather cool), and overlooks Philip Pullman's series concluding with the recently published *The Amber Spyglass*, and, of course, the Harry Potter books. It is a very odd thing, but it does seem that much of the most "realistic" writing—writing that unblinkingly examines the ambiguities and evils of the human circumstance—is now fantasy. Shippey offers several reasons why that might be the case. My own hunch is that we have been through what is, in many respects, the most horrendous century in history, and we cannot bear to see it straight on. Fantasy enables us to examine both great good and great evil with a measure of safety; as though they were, at least a little, elsewhere. Eliot said it a long time ago: "Human kind cannot bear very much reality." That ought not to be the case for people who have been to the cross. But the cushioned piety and preaching of popular religion seldom goes there. This is not an argument against fantasy. On the contrary, fantasy can awaken us to the ultimates of good and evil at stake in the everyday. In fact, Mr. Shippey has convinced me that I really must, sometime soon, see if I can't find that copy of *The Lord of the Rings* that I read with such satisfaction more than thirty years ago.

■ When, after bracing myself with morning prayer, I open the *New York Times*, I know I am reading the

most influential news medium in the world, and that it is liberal, Democratic, and on the left side of almost every issue that distinguishes left and right. A friend from the midwest recently said that he's glad he doesn't have to deal with that each day. He's wrong. The *Times*, more than any other single source, determines the tone and content of network news, as well as that of most of the papers in the country. But back to the point about known bias. People in the news media feel guilty about it, and they shouldn't. The *Washington Post* is certainly among the most influential media. Here is Len Downie, the executive editor who replaced the legendary Ben Bradlee, anguishing about that paper's claimed objectivity: "As I am often reminded, journalists are people, too. They cannot be expected to cleanse their minds of human emotions and reactions to highly charged political campaigns or controversial issues. But we do ask *Washington Post* reporters and editors to come as close as possible to doing just that. In my own case, as some know, I no longer exercise my right to vote. As the final decision-maker on news coverage in the *Post*, I refuse to decide, even privately, which candidate would make the better President or member of the city council, or what position I would take on any issue. I want my mind to remain entirely open to all sides and possibilities." Can you imagine that? Not even privately does he allow himself to have an opinion on the great questions of the day. No, you cannot imagine it, nor can he, unless it's a case of having a mind so open that, as it is said, the brains fall out. That bright young journalist Mark Gauvreau Judge, commenting on Downie's statement, notes that our minds and consciences are always at work forming judgments about truth and falsehood, right and wrong. "There's simply no way around it," writes Judge. "Our moral meters are clicking all the time. They are working in school, at work, in the bedroom. And yes, in editorial meetings. . . . What's so goofy about creating this aura of immaculate imperviousness to emotion and reasoning is that it's just plain not necessary. The *Post* is a liberal paper. That's fine. Its editors are members of the cultural elite. Bully for them. This affects their stories, both how they are written and how they are placed. But so long as they make an honest attempt to give equal time to the other side—that is, equal time in news stories, not on the editorial page—what's the big deal? Why deny it? At the end of the day, someone is correct, someone is not, and there is right and wrong. If a white supremacist group took over the D.C. government and started erecting concentration camps on Pennsylvania Avenue, would Mr. Downie have an

opinion—even privately—on that?" Judge thinks the late Christopher Lasch had an important point when he argued that our civic and political life began to decline when the press began to pretend that it was "objective." We simply aren't made that way, says Judge, citing Aquinas. Minds and consciences are for making judgments, for taking sides. Judge says, "In the last few years, the Internet has provided an explosion of new voices, from Drudge to *Slate*—tendentious, surly, bratty, solipsistic. Not a single one of them is objective. And it's a beautiful thing." Of course, facts should be presented honestly and arguments made reasonably, and one of the facts to be presented honestly is that we make judgments about which facts count most and how they are to be presented, and then present reasonable arguments for the judgments we make. On these issues, too, Mr. Downie does not take a position, if we are to believe him. Which we shouldn't. And he shouldn't either.

■ Some good news on the Russian Orthodox front. Keston Institute, that redoubtable defender of religious freedom, reports that the Moscow Patriarchate is slowly moving to recognize the real heroes and martyrs of the Soviet era. Last year's council of bishops made headlines by canonizing Tsar Nicholas II and his family, but perhaps more important was the canonizing of some of the Slovak bishops who in the 1920s spoke up for the freedom of the Church but were then imprisoned, and replaced by KGB agents who rose to the top of the hierarchy. Keston is encouraged, but asks, "Is the Moscow Patriarchate willing to take [further steps] toward reconciliation by canonizing Orthodox Russians who explicitly rejected the collaborationist tactics chosen by the Patriarchate itself in 1927 and afterward?"

■ A reader complains about "*Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity*" (November 2000). Since our correspondence section allows for responses by people complained about, and 170 signers of the statement cannot respond, permit me to try my hand. The statement says, "Without the long history of Christian anti-Judaism and Christian violence against Jews, Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out." The reader complains that since there would be no Nazism without Nazi ideology, this means that "Christians are to blame for Nazism and its concomitant atrocities." He thinks this inconsistent with the statement's further statement that "Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity." First, there was in fact a

long history of Christian anti-Judaism, as there was also a long history of Jewish anti-Christian hostility, but the first was certainly dominant in Europe, and in Germany more specifically, and it was exploited by the Nazis. There was also a long history of Christian violence against Jews, as there was also a long history of Christian peoples providing refuge, albeit often insecure refuge, for Jews. It is surely the case that "Nazi ideology could not have taken hold nor could it have been carried out" apart from this complex history. That is perfectly consistent with the statement's assertion that "Nazism itself was not an inevitable outcome of Christianity." Hypothetically, that complex history could have turned out differently. Since Christians were primarily in charge, Christians bear more responsibility than Jews for how it did turn out, including the unspeakable tragedy of the Holocaust. As I read the statement in question, it is simply reaffirming Milton Himmelfarb's conclusion of many years ago, "No Hitler, No Holocaust." Which is not to deny the fact that Christians, and therefore part of the historical reality that is Christianity, bear a large measure of responsibility for the fact that there was a Hitler. Why should we be so fearful of acknowledging that?

■ "New From Abingdon Press" is an ad in the program of the annual meeting of the American Academy of Religion. Among the books promoted, so to speak, is *The Bible and Homosexual Practice* by Robert A. Gagnon of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Here is the publisher's description: "The author presents a critical but ultimately conservative view of the import of biblical injunctions against homosexuality. Gagnon aligns himself with those who support the authority of the received biblical texts and the ancient cosmological view that mandates the strict definition of gender roles and the sanctification of sex only in the context of heterosexual marriage." All that is missing is a final line: "We don't know why we are publishing this reactionary rant."

■ *Religion Watch* reports on a recent gathering of the religious left, organized by Union Theological Seminary and the Institute of Democratic Studies. The purpose of the meeting was to develop strategy to counter the growing influence of conservative renewal groups in denominations such as the United Methodist and Presbyterian Church (USA). Dr. Robert Bohl, former moderator of the Presbyterians, declared that the time for establishing "common ground" between conservatives and liberals is past. The Rev. Welton

Gaddy of the Interfaith Alliance agreed. The enemies of "progressive Christianity," speaker after speaker said, are motivated by a thirst for "power and control" rather than by theology or concern about issues such as same-sex unions. In this respect they are presumably unlike the friends of "progressive Christianity," although there was no reference to the theological motivation of the Institute of Democratic Studies, a secular think tank that watchdogs the political right. Diane Knippers, head of the Institute on Religion and Democracy, told *Religion Watch* that the influence of the religious left is indeed being "slowed and halted." And so the mainline/oldline battles continue. A big difference from, say, twenty years ago is that the religious left now identifies itself as such, rather than assuming that denominational control is its by natural, if not Divine, right.

■ An idea that has been kicking around for a year or so may not survive the kick delivered when Robert Edgar, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches (NCC), felt himself forced to withdraw from an ecumenical statement on marriage. It happened this way. On November 14, 2000 there was much attention paid when top officials of the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Association of Evangelicals, the Southern Baptist Convention, and Edgar for the NCC jointly issued a "Christian Declaration on Marriage." While the statement did not mention homosexuality or same-sex arrangements, it did refer to marriage as "a holy union of one man and one woman." Within days, the "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Caucus" at the NCC's General Assembly meeting in Atlanta succeeded in getting Edgar to state to the assembly that he was offering a "public apology" for his "mistake" in signing the declaration. The same assembly ratified, at Edgar's urging, an "Expanding the Ecumenical Vision" resolution that calls for a closer relationship between the NCC and Catholics, Evangelicals, and Pentecostals. That is the idea that has been kicking around in order to revive the near-moribund NCC. After the fiasco of NCC withdrawal from the "Christian Declaration on Marriage," it seems to have stopped kicking.

■ Baylor University has legitimate aspirations to being recognized as a major research institution. Those hopes were dealt a severe setback when William A. Dembski was removed as director of the newly established Michael Polanyi Center. Dembski, a contributor to this journal, is a widely acclaimed leader in intelligent design theory, and became a victim of what is best described as intellectual

McCarthyism agitated by Baylor faculty who were fearful that the Baptist school would be tainted by association with “creationism”—in this case a smear word for any scientific challenge posed to Darwinian orthodoxies. The sordid story is told in detail by Fred Heeren in “The Lynching of Bill Dembski” (*American Spectator*, November 2000). University president Robert Sloan finally caved and dismissed Dembski for not being “collegial.” His offense was that he had issued a press release following a peer review committee’s finding in his favor and refused to retract it. His release said, “My work on intelligent design will continue unabated. Dogmatic opponents of design who demanded the Center be shut down have met their Waterloo. Baylor University is to be commended for remaining strong in the face of intolerant assaults on freedom of thought and expression.” That is feisty, but it is as nothing compared to what his opponents said about him. I know and respect President Sloan, but the dismissal of William Dembski is a personal injustice, a disservice to academic and scientific integrity, and, as aforesaid, a severe setback to the aspirations of a good university to be respected as among the best.

■ I said in the November 2000 issue that the committee of the bishops charged with implementing the *mandatum* (certification) of those teaching Catholic theology had as their official consultants representatives of organizations flatly opposed to any implementation at all. That is not true of all the organizations who nominated consultants. The Canon Law Society has not taken a position against the *mandatum*, and its consultant, Father James J. Conn, S.J., has written in support of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* and of the *mandatum* that it proposes. My apologies for this important oversight.

■ The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League came out blasting the statement on the Middle East adopted by the Catholic bishops in their fall meeting. In response to which, other Jewish organizations—Union of American Hebrew Congregations, United Synagogue of America, Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the Rabbinical Assembly—sent a letter to Conservative and Reform congregations saying that the bishops’ statement “is a balanced one, in places aggressively so.” I’m not sure what it means to be aggressively balanced, but the letter is generally supportive of what the bishops said, and it adds this: “It is worth noting that this statement, and others by the Catholic Church, stand in stark contrast to the

much more one-sided statements coming from some Protestant denominations. We urge you to reach out to the Catholic leadership in your communities, to begin (or continue) a dialogue on these issues.” Rabbi James Rudin recently retired as interfaith director for the American Jewish Committee, and he is sorely missed.

■ M. Alain Vivien, who headed a parliamentary investigation of cults in France, is not, as we mistakenly reported, a former foreign minister but was undersecretary of state in the foreign ministry. Also, Southern Baptists are not on the government’s list of 172 suspect “sects.” That having been corrected, we still think the Catholic Church in France should try to instruct the government on the requirements, and undeniable risks, of religious freedom.

■ Elsewhere in these pages is a comment on the political advocacy of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). We asked the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the country’s largest Protestant denomination, for a list of its interventions regarding bills or proposals before Congress. The SBC’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission is, in terms of staff and budget, a very modest operation compared with the USCC, and the director of the Washington office points out that, while they have been involved in all the items listed, the involvement is sometimes very limited. The list includes twenty-three issues: under pro-life twelve, pro-family (including opposition to gambling and pornography) five, religious liberty three, and international human rights, including religious freedom, three. Of the twenty-three issues, it would seem that the SBC and USCC are on the same side with respect to nineteen or twenty. Other Protestant groups, such as the United Methodists, have a much larger and more leftist lobbying presence in Washington. In the months ahead we hope to provide a more comprehensive report on religious policy interventions in Washington and at other levels of government.

■ The New York Public Library had an impressive exhibit built around the idea of utopia in Western history. Elizabeth Kirkland Cahill reviews it in *Commonweal*, suggesting that the quest for utopia is “something of a moral choice.” “Wrapped in the heavy mantle of materialism, captivated by the illusion of personal autonomy, do we even bother any longer to dream of a perfect society?” Well, yes. When, for instance, we lift up our hearts in the Eucharist and join angels and archangels and all the

company of heaven in the song of the New Jerusalem. Ms. Cahill cites Jefferson ("We hold these truths . . .") and concludes, "While these words have not brought about utopia, they do serve as a salutary reminder of principle to those who carry the quest for utopia forward into the twenty-first century." Not quite. They are a salutary caution against those who, in this century or any century, claim to be carrying forward the quest for utopia. That much we should have learned by now.

■ While poorly designed school voucher initiatives in Michigan and California were overwhelmingly rejected by the voters last November, the movement for parental choice in education will certainly not go away. (See John E. Coons, "Populism and Parental Choice," FT, November 2000.) Jewish Americans are, with Orthodox exceptions, prominent in opposing government aid to religious schools, viewing it as a dangerous violation of "the separation of church and state." That has been the strongly held position of the American Jewish Congress, and it is therefore noteworthy that a special issue of its *Congress Monthly* offers a fair airing of the voucher question, pro and con. Congress codirector Marc D. Stern is decidedly con. "The idea that the government should not fund discrimination is a powerful one," he writes. "Even if the government is ultimately persuaded to permit religious discrimination, there is no bar to private suits to end government-subsidized religious discrimination." The repeated reference to "discrimination" is curious. There is not one institutional association of consequence, public or private, that does not depend upon discrimination. Every association—from friendship to business corporations to graduate schools to the U.S. Senate—exists by virtue of discriminating between those who are part of it and those who are not. For good reasons this country has decided, in both law and popular mores, that discrimination on the basis of race is wrong. (Although, and for defensible reasons, leadership positions in, for instance, the NAACP are not open, as they once were, to non-blacks.) "Discrimination" became a dirty word because Catholics, Jews, and, most notably, blacks were once excluded from employment, housing, and, in the last case, the basic rights of citizenship. It should not be used as a term of opprobrium to describe what is, in fact, people freely exercising their decision to associate with those whose purposes they share, and to favor institutions that advance those purposes. Especially when that decision is about the deepest bonds of religious faith and life. That the American Jewish Congress relies

so heavily on "discrimination" in making its case against vouchers is further evidence of an argument in desperate trouble.

■ Gimlet-eyed reader David LeMay reports that city buses are carrying ads for the *New York Times* online service: "Omniscience, Updated Hourly." The concept of updated omniscience has interesting metaphysical possibilities. But I expect the *Times* intends to say no more than what it always says, that it knows it all.

■ It's just the kind of thing you would expect P. D. James—the author of mystery stories of which I cannot get enough—to say. She recently turned eighty, and Boris Johnson of the *Spectator* interviewed her. For instance, she said this: "I think there is badness in all of us. Yes. I would take the religious view that we are all in need of divine grace, but I don't think we are all capable of murder, and I do think there are people who seem to be naturally good. I've met them and they seem to be born generous, kind, stoical, self-effacing, loving, just generally rather good. Others torture animals from childhood; they take pleasure in cruelty from really quite an early age. They seem to be born with a greater propensity to evil than the rest of us." At the end of the conversation she said that she thinks Iris Murdoch got it right when asked about what is important in life: "To love well, to work well, and try to be good." Mr. Johnson promised to give it a whirl.

■ During Al Gore's inglorious efforts to get to the White House after the election was over, some readers were no doubt wondering where it was that they had heard about "chad" before, as in hanging, dimpled, pregnant, and so forth. It was probably from their reading of Venerable Bede, who tells us that St. Chad was a priest of Northumbria who was appointed Bishop of York but was then asked by St. Theodore of Canterbury to step aside. Chad replied, "If you decide that I have not rightly received the episcopal character, I willingly lay down the office; for I have never thought myself worthy of it, but under obedience, I, though unworthy, consented to undertake it." A class act, that. Quite unlike . . . but I need not state the obvious.

■ Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, is sometimes touted as the next Archbishop of Canterbury. He is noted for, inter alia, not falling into the usual categories of liberal or conservative. But an article in the *Spectator* takes him to be more

Tory than Whig. Whiggery is everywhere now, he complains. "That's really what the truth is—not the particular configuration of the political landscape of the moment—but the restless affair with innovation is everywhere. Toryism, to me, means, at its best, a temperament; someone who is averse to grand rational schemes." Pressed (and he had to be pressed) on whether there should be women bishops in the Church of England, he responds, "If there are women bishops in Orthodoxy and in other parts of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, I would, of course, conform to the decisions of the Church." That, one may safely assume, is an if that will never come due.

■ A reader survey indicates, among other things, that in the last three years the average age of subscribers has increased by one year. Our circulation manager suggested that we should advertise that our subscribers age at one-third the rate of the general population. Anyone who would believe that is not a potential subscriber to FIRST THINGS. To those whom you think might be, however, we will be happy to send a sample issue. Please send names and addresses to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York 10010 (or e-mail to subscriberservices@pma-inc.net). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll-free 1-800-783-4903.

Sources: David Frum on the election, *National Post*, November 9, 2000. Stanley Young on same, *Washington Post*, December 13, 2000. Francis Fukuyama on conservatives in election, *Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 2000. Stephen L. Carter's *God's Name in Vain* reviewed by Brent Staples, *New York Times Book Review*, November 25, 2000. On same-sex unions at Duke University, press release November 7, Wainwright correspondence.

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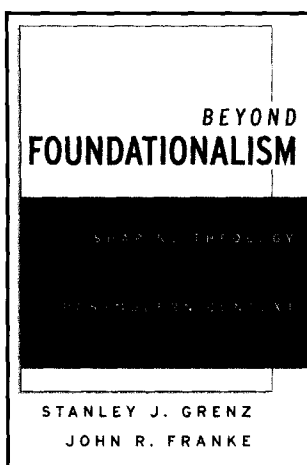
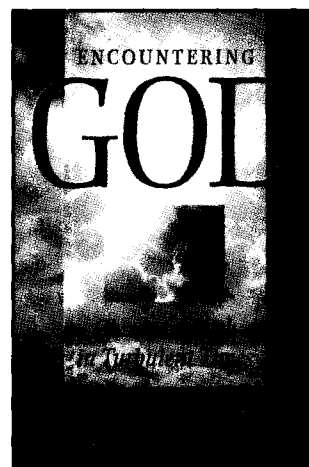
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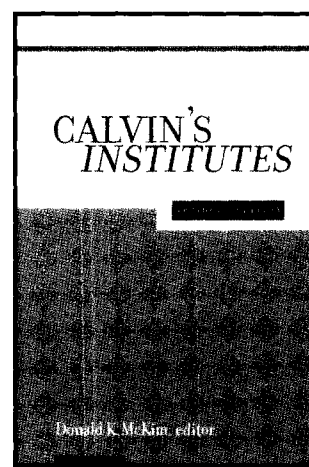
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